



# THE WORLD-WIDE WAR

## FIRST STAGE

A GRAPHIC RECORD OF EVENTS  
WITH NUMEROUS MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

BY

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## PREFACE

THIS little book is an outline of the history of the Great War up to the end of the winter. It is intended to set forth in untechnical language the resources of the two groups of Powers engaged in the struggle, and to trace the course of events on land and sea in the first six months of the War. In the concluding chapter the results so far obtained are summed up, and an attempt is made to describe the situation at the moment when, after there had been for some weeks something like a deadlock in the land campaign, both sides are preparing for operations on a large scale in the spring. The book is intended to be not merely a record of the past, but also a key to the understanding of the operations that are now beginning. No one can follow these with intelligent interest, unless he understands something of the way in which the existing conditions have arisen both in the Eastern and the Western theatre of war. By studying the events of the opening campaigns with the maps which illustrate them one can understand the characteristics of the various theatres of war, and the importance of the ground in its connection with military operations.

A. H. A.

LONDON,

*April 15, 1915.*

# THE WORLD-WIDE WAR

## CHAPTER I

### HOW THE WAR BEGAN

THE great war which began in the summer of 1914 was the result of a tension between two groups of European Powers that had been growing for years. There had long been many possible causes for a quarrel. The nations were divided by rivalries, both on the Continent and in the sphere of Colonial interests. And for a quarter of a century the armaments of the Powers on land and sea had steadily increased, so that Europe had become an armed camp, and the expenditure on war preparations had become a burden, even in time of peace, almost as great as the cost of earlier wars.

More than once the rival ambitions of Austria and Russia in the Balkan region, and of France and Germany in North Africa had produced a crisis which almost led to an outbreak of war. The growth of the German Navy was regarded as a continual menace to Britain, and was the chief factor in bringing about the *entente*



or informal understanding with France which completed the division of the great powers of Europe into two rival groups. On the one side was the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austro-Hungary and Italy, and on the other the alliance of France and Russia, strengthened by the *entente* between Britain and France.

By the terms of the treaties which created it, the Triple Alliance was defensive. It was fairly certain that in a European war Germany and Austria would fight side by side, but Italy was a doubtful ally. The Italians were bound by many links of long-standing sympathy with France and England, and there was a strong party in the country, whose ambition it was to wrest from Austria, if the opportunity offered, the Italian-speaking district of the Trentino, and the lands along the eastern shore of the Adriatic, which had once belonged to the republic of Venice. In a war with France and England, Italy, with its enormous extent of coastline, would be singularly open to naval attacks. There were, therefore, many reasons why the Italian Government was likely, in the event of war, to insist if possible on the defensive character of the Triple Alliance, and refuse to take the field beside Austria.

It was quite certain that if either France or Russia were involved in hostilities with Germany, the other partner in the dual alliance would at once declare war ; but England was not directly a party to this Franco-Russian league. Nevertheless she was indirectly bound to France. Twice there had been imminent danger of war arising from the clash of French and

German ambitions in Morocco, and on both these occasions our Government had given the Ministry in Paris to understand that if France were attacked by Germany the British Navy and an expeditionary force from England would assist in the defence of France. Though England reserved full liberty of action, according to the circumstances that might arise in the future, the headquarter staffs of the British and French armies made arrangements for military co-operation in the event of war, and the main strength of the French navy was kept permanently in the Mediterranean, relying upon a pledge that in case of a German aggression the British navy would protect the French coasts in the north and west. In the closing years of the nineteenth century as the result of rivalries in Africa, France had been regarded as our most likely enemy, and our navy had been based chiefly on the Channel ports and the mouth of the Thames. With the new grouping of the nations and the growth of the German navy, Germany became the more likely opponent. Our navy was practically concentrated in the North Sea, and our east coast from Scapa Flow in the Orkneys to Dover was organised as its base of operations.

There was thus for some years a growing tendency towards a conflict between the two groups of powers into which Europe was divided. The event which actually produced the war—the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria at Serajevo on June 28th, 1914, was not the cause, but the occasion of the outbreak of hostilities. It was the spark that exploded the magazine.

The Austrian Government alleged that the Serbian Government was responsible for the assassination, and that it was the culminating act of a conspiracy organised for years at Belgrade. On July 23rd, Austria addressed an ultimatum to Serbia, threatening war at the expiration of forty-eight hours, if all her demands were not complied with. It was at first hoped that even if there were war between Serbia and her powerful neighbour, the sphere of hostilities would be localised by diplomacy, as it had been in the case of the series of Balkan Wars which began in 1912. Russia had declared that she would stand by the little Slav State, and though this pointed to imminent danger of war between the Russians and the two central European Powers, there was a general feeling that a solution for the crisis would be found by the efforts which were being made by the Western powers, and notably by Sir Edward Grey on the part of the British Government. Even when, on the expiration of the ultimatum, the Austrian batteries at Semlin opened fire on Belgrade, the hope of peace was not abandoned. It vanished, however, when on the last day of July the Emperor of Germany declared that while negotiating Russia was carrying out a general mobilisation, and on this plea himself ordered the mobilisation of the German army. A German declaration of war against Russia followed next day. Under the terms of the Dual Alliance a state of war at once arose between France and Germany. Austria-Hungary already at war with Serbia, and with her armies partly mobilised, ordered a general mobilisation, and ranged herself beside Germany against Russia.

Italy, the third party in the Triple Alliance, however, refused to be drawn into the conflict. She declared that Germany was not attacked, but was the aggressor, and that therefore under the terms of the Alliance which was essentially defensive, Italy would remain neutral.

Four great nations were thus at war on the 1st of August. Great Britain had taken certain precautionary steps. The navy, the great fleet, which had assembled a week before at Portsmouth, to be reviewed by the King, instead of dispersing, was transferred to its war stations on the east coast, and the Naval Reserves were called out. On August 4th, on the news that the German armies had violated the neutrality of Belgium, an ultimatum was addressed to Germany, which expired at 11 P.M. that evening, corresponding to the hour of midnight at Berlin. As Germany gave no pledge to desist from the invasion of Belgium, the state of war arose on the expiration of the ultimatum.

We were not formally at war with Austria until August 12th. We may here note the various dates on which war began between the various powers. Austria had declared war against Serbia on July 28th ; Germany declared war against Russia on August 1st. There was no formal declaration of war between Germany and France, but the state of war arose on the 1st, and hostilities began next day. Luxemburg was invaded by the Germans on August 2nd, and Belgium on the 3rd. On the 4th Great Britain declared war against Germany. On the 6th Serbia declared war against Germany, and Montenegro sent a

declaration of war to Vienna on the same day, and to Berlin on the 11th. On the 12th France and Great Britain declared war against Austria. Finally, on August 16th, Japan sent an ultimatum to Germany, requiring the withdrawal of all German warships from the Eastern seas, and the surrender of the German naval base at Kiao-Chau, with a view to its subsequent restoration to China. A reply was demanded within a week, but as none was sent, Japan declared war against Germany on August 23rd. Austria formally declared war against Japan three days later.

The opposing powers in this world-wide war were therefore :—

Great Britain	{	against	{	Germany
France				{Austro-Hungary.
Russia				
Belgium				
Serbia				
Montenegro				
Japan				

## CHAPTER II

### THE OPPOSING FORCES ON LAND

THE armies immediately available at the outbreak of hostilities were the troops already with the colours in each country, and the reserves called out to bring each unit up to a war footing. Every State engaged in the war began at once to form second line armies out of surplus reservists, and their various Home Defence or Territorial Forces. Taking the first line troops immediately available, it was expected that Russia would at once put three million men in the field. But this appears to have been an exaggeration, and it is probable that in the first month of the war the Russian Army did not number much more than two millions. France was expected to mobilise two and a half millions, but these numbers were not actually reached at the outset. The British Expeditionary Force sent to the front in the first month of the war was about 160,000 strong. It is impossible to arrive at the exact figures, but it is probable that before the end of August the Powers of the Triple Entente had a little more than three and a half million men actually in the field. Serbia and Montenegro, with nearly all their male population under arms, could

muster about 400,000 more for the local conflict with Austria.

France had a smaller population than Germany. At the highest estimate she had about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  million men of military age against 12 millions in the German Empire. After the war of 1870 the French military system had been reorganised largely on German lines, and since then successive enactments had made the law of universal military service more and more stringent in order to compensate in some degree for a smaller population by ensuring that every available man should be trained to arms. A Frenchman was liable to be called up for service of one kind or another from the age of 20 to 48. He served three years in the Regular or first line army, and eleven in the Reserve. Then for 14 years more he belonged to the Territorial Army, a second line army for home defence, all of whose officers and men had done their term of service with the Regulars. There were 20 Army Corps in France and an Army Corps in Algeria. Besides the white troops there were native regiments in north Africa, the Algerian Arab and Kabyle regiments, popularly known as "Turcos," and the Moroccan troops and the Negro regiments of the Senegal and Niger regions, troops as warlike as the Soudanese battalions who are the best fighting element in our Egyptian army.

It was estimated that on mobilisation something more than four million men would be available. Of these two millions would belong to the Regular and the rest to the Territorial Army, and the mobilisation scheme provided for about two and a half millions

being employed at the outset in the field armies and frontier garrisons and as line of communication troops.

But the first days of August brought a disappointing experience. There were men in abundance, but the government had neglected to provide arms and equipment on a sufficient scale. Tens of thousands had to be dismissed from the dépôts at which they reported themselves for service. There was shortness of everything that was wanted. A few weeks before the war one of the senators, M. Humbert, had declared that there were not even enough boots for the first line in store, and on the outbreak of the war all the boot factories in England received pressing orders from Paris. By this scandalous failure of the administration France found it impossible to bring anything like the full number of men into line.

But over a million men were available by the second week of August. They were of excellent quality, and the French artillery was markedly efficient. France had been the first European power to adopt the quick-firing field gun as its artillery arm, and there is no doubt it is the best gun of the kind that has yet been designed.

France, however, counted upon the pressure of the Russian armies on the eastern frontier of Germany making it impossible for her enemy to bring anything like an overwhelming force into the field in the west. In extent of territory and in the numbers of its population Russia is the greatest of European powers, and it was anticipated that its armies would play the chief part in deciding the result of the war. Popular estimates



of the military power of Russia were mostly exaggerations based upon the idea that an empire of such enormous extent must be able to place a stupendous army in the field. It was said that eight millions of men would be mobilised, and the Russian Army was spoken of as the "steam-roller" that would crush down all opposition.

Even if such enormous numbers were available, it would have been impossible for Russia to move and supply them, or to find in eastern Europe a battle front upon which they could be usefully employed. The real numbers were formidable enough. At an early date Russia could mobilise two millions of men, with at least half a million more to support them and take charge of all the services in rear of the fighting front. In the first months of the war, perhaps two million more could be organised, mostly second line troops and militia to fill the gaps in the first line and reinforce it, if the opportunity offered. But it would be difficult to employ even half these numbers at the actual fighting front. The great armies of our day cannot exist without a well-developed railway system behind them, and the railway system of Russia is still in a very backward state.

The railways, few in number in comparison with the extent of the Empire, converge westward on Warsaw and the fortified region around it. For some years, in order to compensate in some degree for the deficiency of communications, a large part of the army had been permanently stationed west of Moscow, and the troops in Poland were kept nearly on a war footing. But it was recognised that it would be some weeks before

the first line in the western provinces of Russia could be largely reinforced. And here, too, as in France, though not to the same degree, there appears to have been a lack of due provision of war stores and equipments.

The French Staff, assuming that France would be able to bring her full numbers into line, had informed the British Government in conferences held long before the war, that all we need supply at the outset of a war of defence against Germany would be three army corps and a cavalry division, in all about 160,000 men. This force was ready in a few days after the declaration of war, and, as we shall see, rendered services to France that it would be difficult to over-estimate. The understanding between the two Governments had been that our part in the war would be to secure the command of the sea for the Allies with our navy, and send this auxiliary force to take part in the land operations. But a situation rapidly developed in which it became necessary for Britain to raise armies as numerous as those of the Continental Powers. This was the result of the fact that, from causes already indicated, neither France nor Russia were able in the opening stage of the war to put forth anything like the military effort on which they had counted.

To put the matter quite plainly, instead of having the equality of force that was shown in paper estimates, the Allies were outnumbered by the armies of Germany and Austro-Hungary. Of all the continental powers engaged in the war Germany was the only one that possessed a nearly perfect military organisation and an adequate supply of war stores, and was thus able

to place its full numbers in the field. With the cavalry divisions, its twenty-five Army Corps of the first line were able to mobilise at once with an aggregate strength of over a million men. There were sufficient reservists left over to form a reserve corps for each first line corps during August, thus supplying a second million with the help of a number of Landwehr or Territorial units. The rest of the Landwehr was embodied for garrison and line of communication duties, and also supplied a number of divisions for field service on the eastern frontier. Before the end of August there were 2½ millions of trained men available for the fighting line.

But this was not all. The German Army system is based not on universal service, but on universal liability to service. Germany has never in any one year called up all the young men liable for service, and there is always a surplus left of untrained men. Volunteers were invited from these untrained classes of men under forty years of age, and in a few weeks over a million had responded. The whole of the class of 1914, about 600,000 men in their twentieth year, were called up for training. A reserve of over a million and a half was thus formed.

A German, when once enrolled in the army, serves in the Regular army and its reserves from the age of 20 to 27. Then for twelve years more he belongs to the Landwehr (the guards of the land) or second line. After this he is still liable to be called out for home defence in the Landsturm, or levy *en masse*, and these old soldiers supplied some hundreds of thousands for the defence of the eastern provinces.

Austro-Hungary has three armies. A Regular or

first line army is common to the whole Empire. Besides this, Austria has a second line army of men who have already served in the regulars. This is known as the Landwehr. Hungary has its Territorial Army, known as the Honveds. Besides this, certain districts, such as the Tyrol, are permanently organised to produce a levy *en masse* for local defence. In the first month of the war Austro-Hungary put two millions under arms. But not more than half of these were available for service on the Russian frontier. About half a million were employed against Servia and Montenegro, and a large contingent had to be kept on the Italian frontier on account of the doubtful attitude of Italy. The weak point of the Austro-Hungarian Army is that it contains a considerable Slav element; these troops were of doubtful fidelity. Like Germany, Austro-Hungary possessed a large reserve of untrained men who could be used to create new units and, thanks to the law of universal liability to service, some hundreds of thousands of recruits could be at once called up to the depôts.

To sum up, it may be estimated that by the third week of August the central European powers had about five million men under arms, and more than two million more under training, with a large reserve of trained men in the depôts to make good the first losses. Germany and her ally thus began the war on land with the advantage of numbers on their side.

## CHAPTER III

### THE OPPOSING FORCES ON THE SEA

BISMARCK once said that a war between England and Germany would be like a fight between a whale and an elephant. However elephantine might be the proportions of the German Army, the British Navy would be the biggest thing on the sea. In the great war which began in 1914, the alliance of England gave to the Powers of the Triple Entente an assured naval preponderance from the first moment of the conflict.

We can best realise what the intervention of Britain in the conflict meant if we consider first the relative strength on the sea of France and Russia opposed without our help to Germany and Austria. The German Navy was the second strongest in Europe. The Russian Navy had not yet recovered from the overwhelming disasters of the war with Japan. Germany could hope to secure command of the Baltic, and with the help of the Austrian fleet to sweep the Mediterranean, and also command the northern seas.

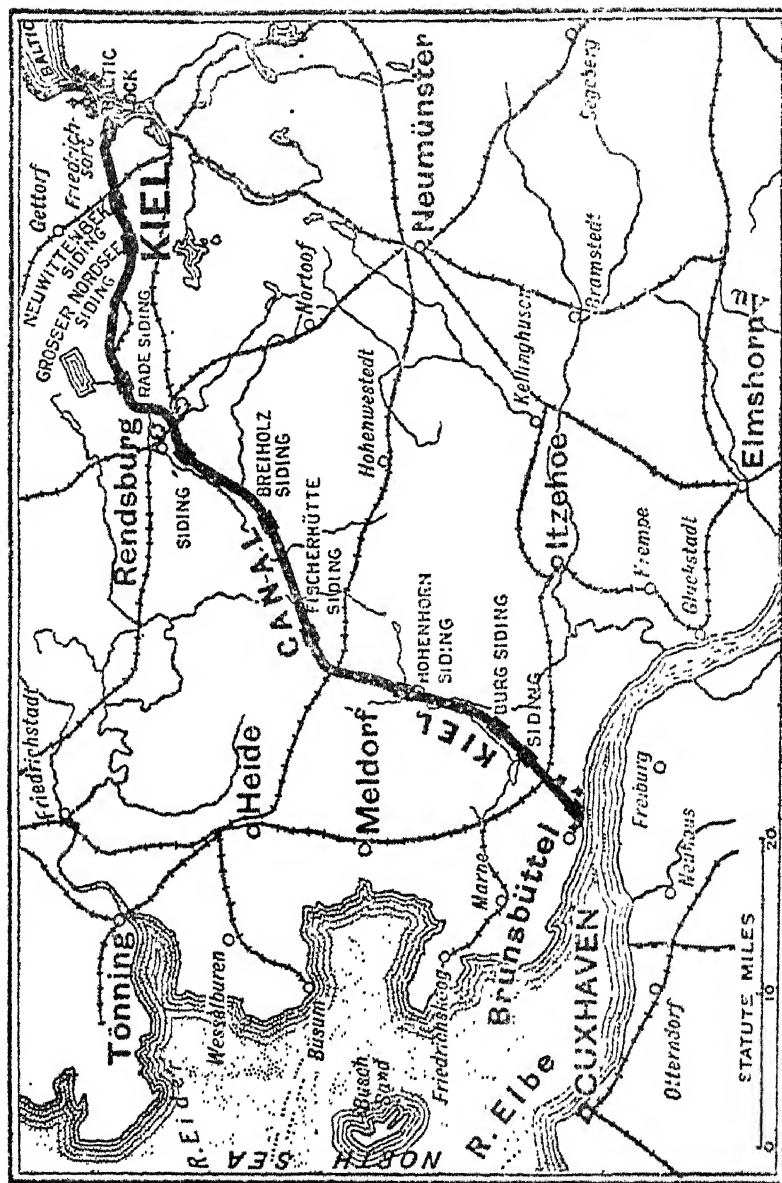
The annexed table shows what was the strength of the two groups of Powers in each class of ships.

# THE OPPOSING FORCES ON THE SEA 15

	Dreadnoughts and Battle Cruisers.	Pre-Dread- nought Battle- ships.	Armoured Cruisers.	Light Cruisers.	De- stroyers.	Torpedo Boats.	Sub- marines.
Germany ...	13	30	40	12	152	45	40
Austro- Hungary...	3	12	3	7	15	54	6
	16	42	43	19	167	95	46
France ...	7	21	19	12	87	159	70
Russia* ...	4	4	6	6	78	?	?
	11	25	25	18	165	159	70

In these lists ships building are not included. If anything, to include them would be slightly to increase the German preponderance. And it must be noted that Germany had a considerable advantage in the geographical position and organisation of her naval bases. On the North Sea she had a line of fortified ports, and further protected by the advanced post of Heligoland which she had made into a sea-girt Gibraltar. These North Sea bases were connected by the Kiel Canal with Kiel and her other ports on the Baltic. With Norway and Denmark neutral access to the Baltic was closed in war time by its natural entrance through the Belts. Germany could thus use a small part of her fleet to immobilise the weak squadron possessed by Russia in the Baltic and put forth nearly the whole of her strength against France with the help of the Austro-Hungarian squadron. The command of the Mediterranean by this combination would

\* Baltic fleet only. The Black Sea fleet could not leave that sea. Its strength was 6 old-type battleships, 11 light cruisers, 25 destroyers, 16 torpedo boats, and 14 submarines.



GEOST. MAP 2, 501 1/2

THE KIEL CANAL.

have made it impossible for the North African contingents of the French army to reach France. And in the naval war Germany might fairly count upon victory on the sea which would put the French coasts at her mercy and further enable her to obtain unlimited supplies from foreign markets.

But the entrance of Britain into the quarrel completely changed the situation. Our navy had never been so powerful, so efficient, so completely organised for war. The East Coast had been carefully prepared as a base of operations for war in the North Sea. The navy had for its fighting force 32 Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts, 38 older battleships, 34 armoured cruisers, 87 light cruisers, 227 destroyers, 109 torpedo boats and 75 submarines. With a force like this not only was the command of the North Sea assured, with the result that France could at once be reinforced with land troops, but we were able also to supply a strong squadron to assist our ally in securing the command of the Mediterranean.

The German fleet found itself helpless to challenge us to battle. While its main fighting force lay secured for awhile by its coast fortifications, all that it could attempt was a kind of naval guerilla warfare of light craft, which might be annoying enough but could not affect the ultimate result of the war. The predominance of our navy was so complete that men hardly realised it. There was no new Trafalgar in which the enemy's fleet was destroyed. It was rendered impotent without a shot being fired. We held the sea unchallenged.

And the effect of this was that France and England had the resources of all the world at their command,



while Germany, as the war went on, found itself compelled to face the difficult problems not only of supplying food for its people, but of providing even the raw material for renewing its armaments and keeping up the store of ammunition necessary for its armies. This was not felt acutely at first, but the indirect pressure of British naval power became more and more telling as the months went on.

As we shall see, the German submarine squadron showed much enterprise in the first period of the war, but its successes never really affected the predominance of our fleets, which grew in relative strength month by month as the dockyards and private shipyards turned out new ships.

There was another new arm on which the Germans had counted as a weapon against our navy. They had a fleet of airships and aeroplanes which they hoped would be a terror to our fleets, but in no single case did aerial attack injure even one of our vessels, and French and British airmen over land and sea showed that they were a match for the German air-craft.

Before closing this brief survey of the relative naval power of the belligerents, it must be noted that it was our complete command of the sea that enabled us to gather the whole forces of the Empire to our aid, and then strike at our opponents not only in Europe but all over the world. It was our naval predominance that made it possible to bring the Indian troops to Europe, the Canadian contingents across the Atlantic, the Australian forces to Egypt. It was our navy that placed a British brigade beside the Japanese before Kiao-Chau, and hauled down the German flag from a

score of islands in the Pacific. Finally, when Turkey joined the central European alliance, it was our navy that made possible the swift seizure of the lands of the lower Euphrates, and the defence of Egypt, and still later thundered at the sea-gates of the enemy's capital.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STRATEGIC CONDITIONS OF THE CONFLICT AND THE GERMAN PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

IN order to understand the story of the war one must realise what were the general conditions of the conflict, and what was the nature of the ground on which the armies met each other in East and West.

First, as to the conditions of sea-power. In the North Sea Britain possessed an overwhelming superiority, and was even able to detach a certain number of ships to strengthen the French fleet in the Mediterranean. In this sea the Germans had only two cruisers, and the Austrian fleet in the Adriatic was inferior even to the French fleet without any British support. This command of the sea in north and south assured the reinforcement of the French armies by the Expeditionary Force from England, and by more than 100,000 French and native troops from North Africa. It also rendered the French coasts absolutely secure from attack.

Thanks to the Kiel Canal, the battleships and large cruisers of the German fleet had free access to the Baltic from their bases on the North Sea. At the same time the Baltic was effectually closed to the British

fleet. The way to it would be through the neutral waters of Denmark and Sweden. The Russian fleet, which had been almost destroyed during the war with Japan, was still in process of reorganisation. The Germans had therefore at the outset the command of the southern waters of the Baltic, and this secured the coast of East Prussia from a Russian descent by sea, and enabled German troops to be transported by water from Kiel, Stettin, and Dantzic to Königsberg for operations on the East Prussian frontier. The Allied command of the sea outside the Baltic also deprived Germany of supplies from abroad for her armed forces and her population. But the effect of this could not be felt in any serious degree until the war had lasted many months.

As to the conditions on land—ever since the formation of the Franco-Russian Alliance, the German Staff had been preparing for the possibility of “a war on two fronts.” On the Eastern front against Russia, and on the Western against France. They based their plans on the assumption that a Russian mobilisation would be very slow on account of the enormous extent of the Russian territory, and the backward state of its railway system. The basis of their plan of campaign would therefore be to endeavour to overwhelm France by a rapid attack of their best troops before Russia was ready to bring her full forces into the field, and having broken the power of France in this way they looked forward to being able heavily to reinforce the armies on the Eastern front in sufficient time to deal with the Russian attack.

For the defence against Russia in the first stage of

the war, they relied upon the help of their Austro-Hungarian Allies and the employment in Eastern Germany of four or five regular army corps of first line troops, and a number of Reserve and Landwehr Corps. They could count upon sending about two million men to the French frontier, while keeping a million more in Eastern Europe. Austria could supply another million after providing for a large army to operate against Serbia and Montenegro, and keep order in Bosnia, while another army was held in reserve on the Italian border in case the anti-Austrian party should succeed in forcing Italy into war.

There would thus be ample numbers available to keep Russia fully occupied in the first weeks of the war, and on this Eastern front Germany and Austria had a fairly advantageous position. On this side the battle ground would be in East Prussia and the old Polish lands, which Germany, Austria, and Russia divided amongst them more than a hundred years ago, Russia taking the lion's share.

Russian-Poland has a frontier of about 1500 miles in length, and on three sides, north, west, and south, it is bounded by German or Austrian territory. The frontier for most of its length is an arbitrary line marked by no natural feature. Germany provided not only for its defence, but also for operations against Russia by constructing all along the frontier a remarkable system of strategic railways, linked up with the Austrian frontier railways in Galicia and encircling Russian Poland with a triple line of rails connected at intervals by cross-lines. This enables German and Austrian armies to be transferred rapidly to whatever

point of the frontier is menaced, or is being used as a base of operations. Behind this railway frontier is the line of fortifications of the Vistula and the Warta, including the great fortresses of Dantzic, Thorn, and Posen, and the Oder supplies a third line of defence nearer Berlin.

The plan of campaign adopted on this front was a defensive at the outset along the German border, and an attack upon Russia from Galicia, east of the Vistula, by a large Austrian army, which was intended to force its way into Russian territory while the mobilisation for its defence was still incomplete.

On the Western front the really serious effort was made. The rapidity of the German mobilisation and the admirably organised railway system of Western Germany facilitated an offensive against France at an early date. The frontier between France and Germany on this side from the Swiss border near Belfort to that of the neutral territories of Luxemburg on the north is less than two hundred miles in length. On the south part of this line the crests of the Vosges form the boundary between Alsace and Eastern France. The frontier then bends round to the north-westward along the borders of Lorraine by Metz and Thionville. On this part of the line it is marked by no natural prominent feature. When this frontier line was marked out after the peace between Germany and France in 1871 it placed the fortresses of Strasburg and Metz in German hands, and left the new Eastern frontier of France absolutely open to invasion. In 1875 the French Government began the construction of a vast system of frontier fortifications. To protect the

eastern border against a German invasion, four great fortresses were erected at Belfort, Epinal, Toul, and Verdun. Each of these places was surrounded by one or more circles of detached forts. Between Belfort and Epinal a chain of forts was erected commanding the passes of the long spur of the Vosges which runs north-westward from the main range near Belfort. A second line of forts was constructed between Toul and Verdun along the wooded hills on the east bank of the upper Meuse. The frontier was thus closed with a wall of fortifications in which there were three narrow gaps. From south to north these are the (1) Gap of Belfort, between the Swiss Jura and the fortress of the same name, a narrow opening behind which were the fortified positions of Montbliard, Besançon, and Pontarlier; (2) The Gap of Neufchâteau, between Epinal and Toul; behind this is the difficult hilly region of the Monts Faucilles, and beyond this the fortified railway junction at Neufchâteau, where a large army could be rapidly concentrated; (3) The Gap of Verdun, between that fortress and the Belgian frontier, and opposite the German fortresses of Metz and Thionville. This gap is only thirty-five miles wide, and behind it is the wooded plateau of the Argonne, a natural rampart against invasion.

Of all the three openings the Gap of Verdun was the most favourable for an invader, and had the additional advantage that it was close to the converging points of several railways from the Rhine at Metz and Thionville. But Germany was mobilising for its first line at least a million men, and to attempt to move forward these enormous masses along the few roads of a front

only thirty-five miles across would be like attempting to force a big crowd through a narrow wicket-gate. Putting all considerations of international law aside, and considering only purely military reasons, it is obvious that it would be to the interest of Germany to secure a wider front of deployment for her vast armies by moving only a part of them through the Verdun Gap and sending all the rest across Luxemburg and eastern Belgium. If this were done, instead of pressing through a narrow gateway only thirty-five miles across, the invaders of France could easily secure a front of deployment 150 miles long. To understand what this means, one must realise that a single Army Corps, with its baggage and artillery, covers more than twenty miles of road. Marching on this road space, it can close up and form for battle in a single day. If the twenty German Army Corps of the first line had been moved through the Verdun Gap, they would form perhaps three columns, each over 120 miles long, and it would have been nearly a week before the rearmost corps could come up in support of those in front.

The French Government had no sooner erected its formidable barrier of eastern fortifications than it was realised that in any future war there would be a strong temptation for Germany to violate the neutrality of Belgium in order to turn the fortress line and secure an ample front for the deployment of its armies. This was why the Belgian Government fortified Liège and Namur in order to bar the great highway into France by the valley of the Meuse through Eastern Belgium. The valley supplies a triple line of movement and communication by the navigable river and by the roads



and railways that follow its course. For at least twenty years before the great war every competent military critic, who discussed the problem of a conflict between France and Germany, predicted that the first effort of the Germans would be directed to obtaining command of the Belgian Meuse in order to turn the fortified frontier of France and invade the country from the north.

On this frontier fortifications had been erected at Mézières, Maubeuge, and Lille, but the French Government had strangely neglected these defences. The invention of high explosives had seriously diminished the value of all the fortifications erected in 1875. A high explosive shell does not merely batter a rampart against which it is directed but, exploding in contact with it, blows it to pieces. Experiment had proved that brickwork, masonry and earthwork could be destroyed in a few hours by the fire of comparatively light guns using the new shells. When General Brialmont fortified Liège and Namur he therefore constructed his forts of concrete and steel, and it was hoped that these would be proof against the new weapons. Something was done by the French Government to bring the eastern fortifications up to date by adding to them armoured steel gun turrets surrounded by massive beds of concrete. Some of the forts of Maubeuge were also thus reconstructed, but the works of Mézières and Lille and of the interior fortifications at Rheims and Laon and around Paris were left in their original state or, even in the case of Lille and Rheims, disarmed and allowed to fall into ruin. It was only the Eastern frontier that was efficiently fortified.

Everything, therefore, pointed to the probability that in case of war the Germans would invade France through Belgium. The Eastern line of fortresses was indeed like a dam which checks the flood immediately in front of it, but sends it pouring round one of its open ends. Belgium had foreseen the danger and realised that mere respect for treaties was not likely to secure its neutrality, nor would the Meuse fortresses alone be a sufficient protection. They could at most delay the invasion. It was necessary to have an efficient field army, strong enough to make Germany hesitate to invade the country, but the creation of this army had only just begun. The law for the reorganisation of the army was only passed in 1909, and the increase of the military forces of the little country had not made much progress. The peace strength of the army was not quite 60,000 men and, after providing for the garrisons of the fortresses, the field army in case of war would not be more than 120,000 strong. The Belgian Army had had no war experience, thanks to the long peace the country had enjoyed since the end of its war of independence more than eighty years ago. The German Staff did not consider that it was very efficient, or likely to attempt any serious resistance to an invader.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FIRST FIGHTING IN THE WEST

WE have seen that it was an essential part of the German plan of campaign to secure at the earliest possible moment an open way for an advance through Belgium into Northern France. To have delayed the first movements until the mobilisation was complete would have risked the success of the operations, for the French would then be ready to come at once to the help of the Belgians. The first German advance was therefore made with a hurriedly concentrated force of regiments which were still on a peace footing, but the units employed were fairly strong, because for some years Germany as well as France had kept the corps stationed at the frontier district almost on a war footing.

The troops employed were three divisions—the 7th Army Corps (Westphalia), the 9th (Schleswig-Holstein) and the 10th (Hanover) each supplying one of these. To this force of infantry and artillery some cavalry brigades were added from the frontier district. In all there were about 40,000 men, and the command was given to General von Emmich, a veteran of the war of 1870.



War had been declared on August 1st. On the next day, Sunday, the 2nd, the neutral territory of Luxemburg was seized by a flying column from the garrison of Thionville. A regiment of infantry was hurried on motor-cars across the border. Luxemburg possessed no army, and after a protest from the Grand Duchess, the Germans occupied the city, a strong position, the possession of which was important to them, as it was the junction point of a number of railway lines leading from western Germany into Belgium and northern France.

The next step, the invasion of Belgium, was taken on the morning of Tuesday, the 4th. Von Emmich's three divisions had concentrated on the frontier the day before. A German column from Aix-la-Chapelle moved along the Dutch frontier to seize the crossing of the Meuse at Visé. The first fighting took place here. A Belgian detachment defended the river crossing, but was driven across the Meuse, and during the fighting the town was set on fire. The main German advance was through Verviers towards the southern front of Liège. The city was supposed to be a strong fortress. It was surrounded by a circle of outlying forts, constructed by General Brialmont. These mounted heavy guns in armoured turrets. The bases of these were surrounded by thick masses of concrete, sheltered beneath which were the magazines and the quarters of the garrison. According to Brialmont's plan, these forts were to have been the artillery positions of an entrenched battle line held by a garrison of about 30,000 men, but the invasion had come as a surprise, and there had been no time to prepare the

ground properly for defence. Some trenches had been dug between the forts, but it was not possible even to clear the ground in their front; and the Germans were able to approach the southern forts under cover of the woods, which extend over the high ground south of the city.

After dark on the evening of the 4th, the German artillery opened fire at long range on the forts of Embourg, Chaudfontaine and Fléron. The guns were firing over the woods and in the dark, but they made wonderfully good practice. Their fire was directed by the map. The position of the batteries was calculated, and once this was done the direction and distance of the forts could be known within a few yards. The guns were the 11-inch field howitzers, throwing a heavy shell with a high explosive charge. The forts replied, but they were firing almost at random against targets, the position of which they could only guess. In a few hours the gun turrets of Fléron were out of action, wrecked by the heavy explosions of the German shells.

Without waiting, however, for their artillery to complete its work, the Germans made during the night repeated attacks on the Belgian trenches between the forts. They evidently did not regard the Belgians as very serious opponents, and expected to be able to rush their defences and penetrate into the city. But all these attacks were repelled, and the Belgians more than once counter-attacked and secured a number of prisoners before morning. General Leman, the Commandant of Liège, reported that the attack upon his works had ended in utter failure.

The invasion of Belgium and the attack on Liège had drawn Britain into the war as the ally of France. There was a general expectation that the resistance of Liège would delay the German advance until the Belgian army could take the field, reinforced by French and British troops. Even before the German invasion the mobilisation of the Belgian army had been ordered as a precautionary measure, and it was concentrating east of Brussels along the line of the river Dyle, King Albert having his headquarters at Louvain. Exaggerated importance had been attached to the mere fact that the enemy had failed to rush Liège in the first few hours of the attack. It was the first of the mistaken impressions propagated by the press in the opening stage of the war.

The German attack on Liège was only beginning. Mere field artillery had been in action on the first night. But Krupp's giant howitzers were being brought up to crush the Liège forts, and once they were brought into action Brialmont's defences rapidly collapsed. Shells weighing over a thousand pounds, and charged with high explosives, are practically flying mines. Once they began to drop on the Liège forts there came the startling revelation that heavy siege artillery could blow to pieces 12-foot beds of concrete and shatter or hurl bodily from their bases the armoured turrets that carried the heavy guns of the forts. In one day with a few well-placed shots the southern forts of Liège were demolished. Those on the other side of the river were still intact. They protected the railway junction, and General Leman held them in order to cover the withdrawal of the

garrison, which was sent away to reinforce the Belgian field army. On the morning of August 7th Liège was at the mercy of the invaders. Some shells had already fallen in the city and, with the Germans holding the southern heights, it was hopeless to defend it. The Burgomaster and the Bishop, with the commandant's authorisation, arranged terms with Von Emmich, and in the forenoon a German division marched into the city. The news of the fall of Liège was not known in England for some days. German reports of this great success were treated as fictions, and the Belgian official reports spoke of the resistance being continued, this statement being based simply on the fact that General Leman was still holding a group of outlying forts on the north side. The Germans did not begin the attack on these until the 13th. On August 15th the last of them was blown to pieces, and General Leman, stunned by an exploding shell, was a prisoner in Von Emmich's hands.

While they were completing the reduction of the Liège defences, the Germans, having already got possession of the river crossings at the city on the 7th, were pushing forward their advance through Belgium north and south of the Meuse. Masses of cavalry supported by infantry detachments conveyed on motor cars moved forward on a broad front, driving in the advanced Belgian troops. Here and there there were skirmishes, some of which were at the time exaggerated in the newspaper reports into serious engagements. Local Belgian successes against isolated detachments were represented as great victories. The only serious fight in those early days was the action at the village of



Haelen, at the crossing of the river Gethe to the east of Louvain. On August 12th, a Belgian division, about 10,000 strong, held the bridges over the little river, and was somewhat rashly attacked by a German cavalry force supported by an infantry brigade and some machine guns. The Germans tried to rush the bridges, and were beaten off with heavy loss.

But despite minor successes, it was impossible for the Belgians to hold back the advancing tide of invasion. The German mobilisation had now been completed. Their force in Belgium was no longer a mere vanguard. Four great armies mustering in all at least half a million men, had poured across the frontier. The first army, under Von Kluck, had crossed the Meuse north of Liège, and was marching on Louvain. The second, under Von Bülow, was advancing on Namur by the Meuse valley. Two other armies, under the Duke of Württemberg and General von Hausen, were massing south of Liège in the wooded hill country of the Ardennes for the invasion of France, with the Crown Prince's army in Luxemburg on their left.

King Albert had at first thought of risking a battle along the line of the river Dyle. He had with him about 100,000 men. But once it was ascertained that the Germans were advancing in such enormous force to have made a stand unsupported on the Dyle position would have meant the inevitable destruction of the Belgian army. It would have been attacked in front by Von Kluck, with the same huge force that was flung against the British at Mons, and turned on the right by another army of equal strength under Von

Bülow. King Albert therefore decided on a retirement through Malines to the protection of the great fortress of Antwerp. This retreat of the Belgian army, which began on August 18th, left Brussels open to the enemy.

On the 19th, the German columns were close up to the eastern suburbs. There had been some talk of attempting the defence of the city, and the civic guard had been busy throwing up entrenchments across the approaches in the direction of the enemy. But it was obvious that any attempt at resistance would only expose the Belgian capital to destruction without any corresponding gain. On the evening of the 19th, the Burgomaster, Monsieur Max, went to Von Kluck's headquarters, and arranged the capitulation, and next morning the Germans marched through the city.

For hours a long column of men, horses and guns streamed along the main line of thoroughfares, but only a few thousand remained to form a garrison. The rest were moving through the city and away to the southwards, while other columns marched in the same direction on a broad front, extending from Brussels to near Namur, of which the siege had just begun. A mass of cavalry was flung out westward towards Bruges and Ghent, and two army corps moved northwards towards Malines, following up the retreat of the Belgian army.

Thus in a fortnight the greater part of Belgium had been overrun, its capital occupied by the invaders, Liège reduced, and Namur besieged. There had been a hope that French and British succours would arrive in time to avert these disasters, but the mobilisation

and concentration of the Allied armies had not been swift enough to enable anything serious to be attempted against the invaders of Belgium in the opening days of the war. But by this time the Allies were moving in force from Northern France up to the Belgian frontier. The object of their advance was to attack the heads of the German columns as they swung round to the southward on both sides of Brussels, with Antwerp on their right rear and Namur upon their left, both held by the Belgians. At this stage of the operations, there was a confident anticipation that the Germans would be pushed back and the rescuing army of the Allies would join hands with King Albert and his Belgians in the deliverance of Brussels from the invader.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FRENCH ADVANCE ACROSS THE FRONTIERS

THE mobilisation of the French army had begun on July 31st, when the news of the German mobilisation reached Paris. At this moment it was probable, but not yet certain, that France would have the support of England as an active ally. It was not until four days later that the French staff was able to count upon the co-operation of a British expeditionary force. For some years the French plan for the eventuality of a war against Germany had been probably based on the prospect of this co-operation. It was recognised that without British help the German army arrayed against France would have a superiority of at least three army corps of the first line, and in the conference that had taken place between the French and the British General Staff an understanding had been arrived at that three corps would be supplied from our side of the Channel to make up for this deficiency.

The chief of the French General Staff was General Joffre. He had served as a young officer of engineers in the war of 1870. After this he had been employed in planning and constructing fortifications in France and her colonies, and he had commanded small forces

in actual war in the Niger campaigns. On the declaration of war he became the Commander-in-Chief of the armies that were to operate in the western theatre of war.

It had been anticipated that within a fortnight of the first day of mobilisation France would have more than two millions of regulars in line, besides the territorial armies mobilised for garrison and line of communication duties. But, unfortunately for France, successive governments had neglected the due provision of arms, equipments and stores for mobilisation, and tens of thousands of men who answered the call to arms could not be equipped and sent into line. The result was that at the outset of the war, even though helped by the British expedition, the French armies were very heavily outnumbered by the enemy.

Under these circumstances, the more prudent course would have been to stand upon the defensive; but the offensive is a tradition of the French army. The value and numbers of the German armies were greatly underrated, and General Joffre decided upon meeting the German advance by a vigorous counter-attack. This was attempted not at one point but at many, with the result that in the first weeks of the war the Germans had everywhere an enormous superiority of numbers.

The first French movement was directed by political rather than purely military considerations. In France every one regarded the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine as a primary object of the war, and the Government realised that the news of a success in the lost provinces would create unbounded enthusiasm. Accordingly,

while the mobilisation was still in progress, on Friday, August 7th, a French column from Belfort marched across the border, drove a German detachment out of Altkirch, and next day pushed on to and occupied Mulhouse, an important railway junction and a great industrial centre. But the whole movement was premature, and the success was short-lived. Strong German forces were concentrated round Mulhouse, and on the 10th the French were forced to retire across the frontier.

After this check nothing serious was attempted until the mobilisation had made further progress. By the end of the second week of August five French armies had been formed, and were massing on a long line extending from the Swiss frontier on the right to that of Belgium on the left. On the right the First Army, under General Pau, held the line of the Vosges. Next came the Second Army under Castelnau, with his headquarters at Nancy, covering the gap in the eastern fortress line, between Epinal and Toul. Another army, based on Verdun, faced the Luxemburg frontier. The Fourth Army, under General De Langle, was on the middle Meuse watching the Ardennes frontier. The Fifth Army (General Lanzerac) was west of the Meuse, ready to move forward between that river and the Sambre. On the extreme left the British troops were arriving.

They had been given this post in the long line because it was the most convenient station for the concentration in the first instance, and the subsequent arrival of supplies and reinforcements for an army landed at the Channel ports from Calais to Havre.

Boulogne was the chief port of disembarkation. On the very night that war was declared detachments had been sent across the Channel to organise the bases for the expedition, and arrange for the landing of the troops. Then for days a constant stream of men and stores was passing across the Channel, the chief port of embarkation being Southampton, but troops being also sent from almost every port from the Thames to the Severn, while the regiments from Ireland embarked at Dublin, Kingstown and Belfast.

The troops were sent away in silence and almost in secrecy. There were no farewell demonstrations, no details published in the press. It was not until August 18th that our newspapers told of the landing in France of the greatest army that Britain had ever sent to the front at the outset of a war. It must be confessed, however, that with all this secrecy at home, the landing of the expedition and many details about it, were known to the greater part of the world at a much earlier date, the American press and the newspapers of neutral countries in Europe publishing long descriptions of the enthusiastic welcome with which our troops were greeted in France.

Our complete command of the sea rendered the protection of the transports a fairly easy matter. The German battle-fleet could not venture to put to sea. Light cruisers, torpedo craft, and squadrons of sea-planes watched the approaches to the Channel. The operation of sending this large force across the narrow seas was carried out swiftly and securely without the life of a single man being for a moment even in peril. It was a triumph of efficient organisation.

The Commander-in-Chief was Sir John French. He had had a long and distinguished military career after a brief period of service as a midshipman in the Royal Navy. He was recognised as one of the best of the cavalry leaders of the day, and he had served in our Egyptian and Soudan campaigns, and afterwards held a succession of high commands in the South African War. For some years he had been chief of the British general staff. He had paid many visits to France at the period of the annual manœuvres, and had an intimate knowledge of the French army and its leading generals.

The force placed under his command numbered about 160,000 men. It was made up of three army corps, each of two divisions, and a cavalry division, the latter commanded by General Allenby. The first corps was commanded by General Sir Douglas Haig, the second by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, and the third by Sir William Pulteney. The force concentrated by railway about Cambrai, and when the general advance of the French left began moved forward to a position inside the Belgian border, with its centre at Mons.

This forward movement was part of a general advance of all the French armies. Before dealing with the operations on the left in which our own men bore such a splendid part, we must briefly note the events which were occurring on the right and in the centre of the long French line, and to make these intelligible we must first say something about the dispositions and movements of the German army.

The Germans had concentrated seven great armies on their western frontier. Of these, five had entered



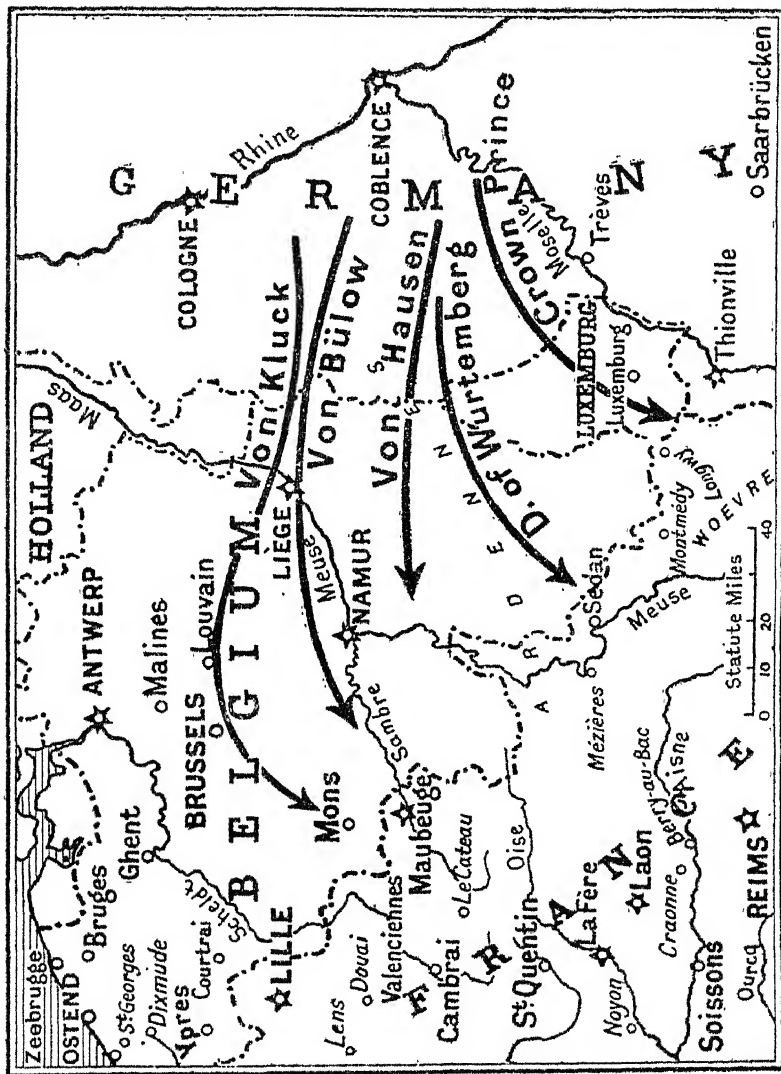
the neutral territories of Luxemburg and Belgium. The two remaining armies were concentrated in Alsace and Lorraine, based on the great fortresses of Strasburg and Metz. On the extreme left was the army of Alsace under General von Heeringen. At the outset of the war its mission was purely defensive. It was to oppose any attempt of the French to advance across the Vosges, or through the gap of Belfort.

The German armies were numbered from right to left. Von Heeringen's was the Seventh Army. The Sixth, concentrated about Metz, was commanded by the Crown Prince Rupert of Bavaria, and was made up of the three Bavarian army corps and a corps from central Germany. Its fighting force would be about 240,000 men. The Sixth and Seventh armies formed the German left.

The right was formed of two armies. The First Army under Von Kluck, and the Second under Von Bülow. Von Kluck, after occupying Brussels on August 20th, had detached a strong force to observe Antwerp, sent a mass of cavalry sweeping westward towards Ghent and Bruges, and himself moved with the bulk of his force southwards towards the French frontier about Mons.

On his left Von Bülow had besieged Namur and was moving towards the line of the Sambre at Charleroi with his main fighting force.

In the centre the Germans had massed no less than three armies. The Fifth Army, under the Crown Prince of Germany, had concentrated in Luxemburg, and pushed forward a column to besiege the old fortress of Longwy, which was making an obstinate resistance.



THE ADVANCE OF THE GERMAN ARMIES THROUGH BELGIUM.

On the Crown Prince's right, among the wooded hills of the Ardennes, the Grand Duke of Württemberg had concentrated the Fourth German Army, with his headquarters at Neufchâteau. In his rear, in the northern Ardennes, was the Third Army, chiefly made up of Saxon troops, under General von Hausen. We shall see that this army was to play a very important part in the German plan of campaign.

Notwithstanding the speedy fall of Liège, it was generally expected that Namur would make a prolonged resistance. Some French troops had been thrown into the place, and elaborate preparations had been made for its defence. It was hoped that the general advance of the French armies on the left would force the Germans to raise the siege. On August 15th, a French column had pushed forward into the Ardennes, and driven a German detachment out of Dinant on the Meuse, a few miles south of Namur. The operation was only a reconnaissance and the French immediately fell back. But the information obtained was misleading. The easy victory at Dinant, and the fact that no German troops had been met in the march across the Ardennes, conveyed the impression that the enemy was not in force in this direction. As a matter of fact, the Germans had not yet moved into the southern Ardennes, and the wooded character of the country prevented the French aviators from discovering the fact that in the days that followed the fight at Dinant, two great German armies were massing among the forest-clad hills.

In the third week of August Joffre ordered a general advance of the French centre and left. Castelnau's

army invaded Lorraine. The Third Army on his left moved forward towards the Luxemburg border to raise the siege of Longwy. De Langle, with the Fourth Army, marched into the Ardennes. He was to clear the woods of the enemy and approach Namur from the south. The Fifth Army under Lanzerac moved up to the line of the Sambre to co-operate in raising the siege of Namur. Sir John French took up a position on the left at Mons to cover the flank of the whole movement, which began on August 20th and 21st.

At first the official French bulletins announced successes. Castelnau had entered Lorraine, driven in the German frontier detachments, cut the railways, and occupied Morhange, Château Salins, and Saarburg. On the Luxemburg border the advanced troops of the Crown Prince were driven in from Spincourt and Longuyon, and in the Ardennes De Langle's army was across the ravine-like valley of the river Semois.

But then came the first tidings of disaster; news which passed almost unnoticed at the time in Britain amid the excitement aroused by the tidings that our own men had been in action at Mons. Except on the extreme left in Alsace, the Germans were everywhere advancing. The Bavarian army, moving south from Metz, attacked De Castelnau about Morhange. In the great battle which lasted from dawn to twilight of the summer day the French were defeated and driven across the frontier. The 15th French corps, southerners from Provence, gave way in something like a panic. The Bavarians took eighty guns and thousands of prisoners. De Castelnau fell back on Nancy, and further south, under the impression of the defeat,

General Pau's army evacuated all the ground it had won on the Alsatian slopes of the Vosges.

And there were other defeats in the centre. The Crown Prince's army advancing from Luxemburg drove back the French troops as they moved out from Verdun towards Longwy. Among the woods of the Ardennes the Würtemberg army inflicted a serious defeat on General de Langle, who fell back to defend the line of the Meuse, about Sedan and Mézières, followed up by the victorious Germans.

While this was happening on the French right and centre, the left, formed of the Fifth Army under De Lanzerac and the British under Sir John French, had been in action with the armies of Von Kluck and Von Bülow. At the time these battles were regarded in England as the chief events of those critical days of the war. But from what has been said, it will be seen that they were only a part of the series of great battles which were taking place on a front of about two hundred miles. Viewing all these actions as parts of one great whole one may say that this battle of millions along the French frontier in the third week of August was the greatest battle the world had ever seen.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BATTLES OF CHARLEROI AND MONS AND THE BEGINNING OF THE RETREAT

WHEN the fighting began on the Belgian frontier Sir John French had with him Allenby's cavalry division and the First and Second Army Corps under Haig and Smith-Dorrien. The Third Corps was completing its disembarkation in France, and the troops already landed were on the line of communications. The British crossed the Belgian frontier on Saturday, August 22nd, and occupied a front of about 25 miles in length, with the centre at Mons, the left at Condé, and the right at the town of Binche. The line was prolonged eastward along the river Sambre by the army of General de Lanzerac, who had his headquarters at Charleroi. On Lanzerac's right French detachments guarded the crossings of the Meuse towards Dinant. Further north the German artillery was bombarding the forts of Namur.

Parties of French cavalry had been scouting north of the Sambre, riding over the old battlefields of Ligny and Quatre Bras. They had been driven in by superior forces of German horsemen, close behind whom Von Bülow's Army was moving towards the Sambre in several parallel columns.

As the British troops reached the ground they were to hold about Mons they at once began to entrench the position. The cavalry scouting to the front, and the British aviators, brought in news that the Germans were advancing on every road leading from Brussels. Mons is the centre of a colliery district, and the troops entrenched themselves along railway lines and among the shale-heaps of the collieries. Haig with the 1st Corps held the right of the line from Binche to near Mons. Smith-Dorrien with the 2nd Corps occupied the city of Mons, and thence his line stretched westward along the bank of a canal to Condé. During the Saturday and the early hours of Sunday there was no attack on the British position, but there were exciting moments when German aeroplanes came droning overhead, and gunners or riflemen tried to bring them down, and English airmen flew up to drive them away.

But from the eastward there came like the rumbling of a distant thunderstorm the sound of battle along the Sambre. Von Bülow was attacking Lanzerac, and his frontal attack along the river was combined with a dangerous flank movement against the French right. We have seen that in the Northern Ardennes, all unknown to the Allies, the Third (Saxon) Army under von Hausen had been massed under the cover of the woods. On the Saturday morning the Saxons crossed the Meuse south of Namur, and made a combined attack with Von Bülow's left on the French right along the river. The Germans being thus in possession of both banks of the Sambre towards Namur, were able to roll up and force back the French right, gaining possession of crossing after crossing on the river.

There was a desperate fight in and around Charleroi, which was taken and retaken several times, and was wrecked and set on fire by alternate bombardments of the German and French artillery. But by the afternoon it was in secure possession of the enemy, and by evening the French were retiring all along the line. By some unfortunate error no news of the result of the battle at Charleroi reached Sir John French's headquarters until late in the following day. He was thus committed to a battle on the Mons position after the French had been driven in on his right, so that Von Bülow's Army was moving through the country to his right rear.

At the same time the forts of Namur were crumbling under the fire of the German howitzers, and on the Sunday, while the British were fighting at Mons, the defence of the fortress collapsed. It had made even a briefer resistance than Liège.

Early on the Sunday afternoon (August 23rd) Von Kluck attacked the British at Mons. Along several miles of the front, especially in the centre, the ground over which the enemy advanced was screened with woods, and though the attack was expected and had been prepared for by the British Commander-in-Chief and his Generals, it came as something of a surprise to not a few of the men in the British trenches. The morning had been quiet, they had worked at improving their positions with pick and spade, they had seen some German aeroplanes driven away, and they had cooked and eaten their midday dinners, without being disturbed. Then suddenly the enemy's artillery opened, the fire spreading rapidly along miles of front,



and the British artillery replying. Hundreds of guns were in action, and the enemy had got into position several heavy howitzer batteries whose fire, directed with the help of aeroplanes, was particularly trying to men in the open trenches.

Under a fierce bombardment our men were remarkably steady, but the Germans evidently thought they must be badly shaken by this downpour of fire and steel. For within an hour of the first shot they advanced in close order to the attack at many points along the front. In their grey-green uniforms they could hardly be seen until they were within a few hundred yards of the British front. They held their fire until the range was under 500 yards, and then they began firing as they came on. Our men had suffered some loss from the artillery, but they were surprised to find that the German rifle fire was comparatively harmless. It mostly swept over the trenches, inflicting very little loss on the men who held them, and whose careful training in firing from cover now stood them in good stead. Against the easy targets presented by the close ordered German lines the fire of the British rifles was deadly. Attack after attack melted away under the fire from the trenches, aided by the rain of shells from the British batteries.

All the earlier attacks of the enemy were thus easily repulsed. Our men, after the first onset, began to think their task was a fairly easy one. The enemy showed indeed the most reckless courage, but the way in which they pushed forward—line crowding on line, till the attack became a mass of men—courted destruction. The fact was that they thought the British had been

thoroughly shaken by the heavy bombardment, and all that was necessary to secure a success was a determined rush at the trenches. Here and there the enemy, notwithstanding terrible loss, pressed close up to the British front, but always gave way when our men charged out of their entrenchments with the bayonet. It was said at the time that the Germans were always afraid of cold steel, but they showed on many occasions that they were good bayonet fighters, and the collapse of the attack at Mons was not due to any lack of courage on their part. It is a common experience of war that men, however brave, will give way before a counter-attack with the bayonet made at the moment when they are just able to get forward after struggling onwards under a storm of fire that is causing them heavy loss. The sudden counter-attack is the last straw that breaks down their fighting power for the moment.

Though the first infantry attacks had thus failed, the Germans had such a superiority of numbers that they could afford to disregard heavy loss and renew the attack again and again. All the time the storm of shrapnel from hundreds of guns rained on the British lines, many of the German batteries being made up of heavy howitzers that sent their shells from concealed positions in the woods. The loss caused by this bombardment was, however, not very great, and the men stood the novel experience with perfect steadiness. There is no doubt that but for the retirement of the French on the right, the Mons position could have been held indefinitely. It was a success of the Germans in the fighting along the Sambre the day before that

enabled them to concentrate an overwhelming force of guns and men against the exposed British right. It was just when the pressure in this direction had become so severe that Haig was compelled to draw the 1st Division back from Binche in order to avoid being outflanked, that Sir John French heard for the first time of the retreat of Lanzerac's Army. The news conveyed by a telegram from the French headquarters completely altered the situation. Sir John French realised that it would be impossible to hold for long what was now an isolated advanced position about Mons, and he made preparations for a retirement to another position a few miles further back just inside the French frontier, where his right flank would be protected by the fortress of Maubeuge. But the withdrawal could not be attempted under the actual pressure of the enemy's attacks. The Mons position would have to be held until darkness put an end to the fighting, and all preparations made for a well-ordered retreat southwards at dawn on the Monday morning.

The withdrawal of Haig's men on the right, though it was only for a comparatively short distance, made the centre of the British line in and about Mons a salient projecting into the enemy's ground at a dangerously sharp angle. The Germans could now attack Mons on two sides, and the brigade which held it might be cut off. Orders were therefore sent to evacuate the city and hold the ground to the south of it. As darkness came on our right and centre had been pushed back, but the left between Mons and Condé had successfully defied every attempt of the enemy to

force the line of the canal. During the day the bridges had been held in order to make counter-attacks upon the enemy, but as evening came on one after another was blown up all along the line.

Before darkness set in the transport trains and the ambulances were being moved to the rear to clear the roads for the retirement of the troops at dawn on the Monday. Later in the evening there seems to have been a partial change of plans, and about 11 o'clock word was passed to some of the regiments in the front to begin the retreat at once. The Germans were close up to our line and soon discovered that the movement was in progress. Pressing forward they captured a good many stragglers, and even some small detachments, which had delayed too long or lost their way.

The general retirement began in the early hours of Monday, the 24th. As the enemy's attacks during the day before had been made most persistently and in the greatest force against the British right, it was important to check the German advance on this side in the first stage of the retreat. The first division of Haig's Corps, supported by more than 100 guns, was therefore sent forward at daybreak to make a false attack in the direction of Binche. The operation was so well conducted by General Lomax that the enemy were driven back for a while and forced to assume the defensive. Meanwhile the 2nd Division was well on its way southward. The 1st Division then broke off the action and followed it, the retirement being covered by Smith-Dorrien, with the 2nd Corps, and a brigade of the 3rd Corps, which had come up in the early morning, holding for some hours a position to the south of Mons against

the persistent attacks of the German right. Towards noon Smith-Dorrien, in his turn, retired, and early in the afternoon the whole of the Expeditionary Force was in line on the new position with its right resting on the fortress of Maubeuge and its left towards Valenciennes.

It was during Smith-Dorrien's retirement that Allenby's cavalry came into action to protect his left from a dangerous turning movement of the enemy. An attempt to charge the German infantry ended in failure and heavy loss as the cavalry found their way checked by wire fences and had to retire under fire. But a squadron of the 9th Lancers, under Captain Francis Grenfell, saved the guns of the 119th Battery, which were in imminent danger of capture. Grenfell, who had been already wounded in the charge, got together a party of volunteers and dragged the guns by hand into a position of safety under a terrible shrapnel fire. For this gallant act he received the Victoria Cross. Imaginative artists of some of the illustrated papers have represented this exploit of the 9th Lancers as a headlong charge against a German battery in action, and the story in this mistaken form has even been made a subject of a popular picture. This is how legends arise in the course of all great wars.

When Sir John French withdrew to the Maubeuge position just inside the French frontier he expected to be able to make a stand there. But this would only be possible if Lanzerac's French Army had been able to hold the ground to the east of Maubeuge. The French, however, were still retiring, hard pressed by the enemy. Further to the left of the British a German

force, after capturing Tournai, was making a wide turning movement against the extreme left of our line. To have fought a battle on the ground where our troops halted on the Monday afternoon would have been to run a serious risk of being driven behind the shelter of the Maubeuge forts, and the experience of all wars proves that an army that once allows itself to be driven into a fortress and besieged there is doomed. Sir John French therefore decided to continue the retreat southward, protecting as he did so the left of the broken French line which was now being pushed back all along the frontier from Maubeuge to Verdun.

## CHAPTER VIII

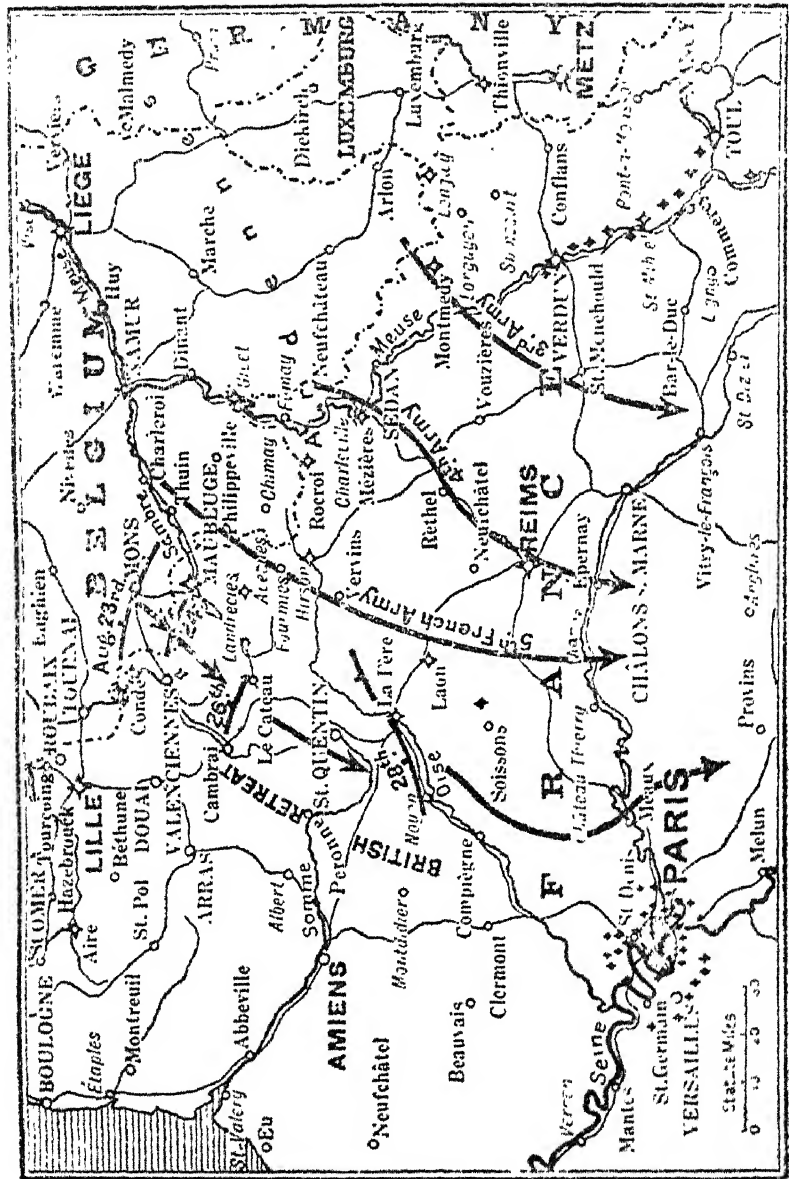
### THE RETREAT ACROSS THE MARNE

THE most difficult operation in war is a retreat in the presence of an enemy superior in numbers and flushed with success. It can only be carried through successfully if there is the soundest of judgment in the leaders, and the most resolute courage and unbroken discipline in the men. Battles have to be fought to check the pursuit, and the fighting broken off neither too soon to leave the enemy unchecked, nor too late to avoid being outflanked and cut off by columns advancing to the right or left. During the anxious days after the battle of Mons our Army in France successfully endured this supreme test, fighting day after day, marching by day and by night, suffering heavy losses, but never for a moment losing courage, and, when the time came, turning upon the enemy and contributing largely to a victory of the Allies that changed the whole course of the campaign.

During the last week of August, which witnessed the British retreat on Paris, the whole of the Allied line was retiring. In the east the French Armies drew back to the Vosges and the fortified line of heights between Toul and Verdun. De Castelnau's Army

successfully held the hills around Nancy against a determined attack by the Bavarian Army under the eyes of the Kaiser. This was the one solid success won by the Allies in these days of impending disaster. West of Verdun the Crown Prince's Army drove Saerrail's French Army southwards towards the upper Marne. In the Allied centre De Langle tried to check the German advance on the middle Meuse about Sedan, but he was attacked in front by the Duke of Würtemberg's Army from the Ardennes, while Von Hausen, with the Saxon Army, moved against his left flank. On the day of the battle of Mons Von Hausen had forced the crossing of the Meuse at Dinant. He attacked the small French force holding the place in front across the river and on its left by the other bank of the Sambre. Having captured Dinant he marched up the left bank of the Meuse and the fortress of Mézières surrendered to him almost without firing a shot. He was then on the left flank and rear of De Langle's Army, and the French abandoned the line of the Meuse and fell back towards the Aisne. While our men were fighting and retreating towards Paris, De Langle, hard pressed by the enemy, was retiring on Rheims. He was driven out of Rethel after a hard fight. The idea of defending Rheims had to be abandoned, and the French centre fell back across the Marne after another unsuccessful battle near Chalons. Meanwhile Lanzerac's Army, which stood next to the British, was falling back towards Laon. All along the line west of Verdun, the French were retreating and the invaders were scoring a series of successes. One must understand this in order to realise that the most





THE ALLIED RETREAT.

that Sir John French and the British could attempt was to delay the German right where two great armies had been concentrated, which but for the dogged resistance of our men would have come pouring round the exposed flank of the French Armies and converted temporary defeat into irreparable disaster.

Before briefly describing the British retreat to the Marne, we must note that still further to the west large masses of German cavalry supported by infantry detachments conveyed on motor-cars, were moving into the north of France between the British left and the Channel ports. The raiders occupied Lille and pushed on to Amiens, cutting the railways to Calais and Boulogne, with the result that the British base of supply had to be moved from the Channel coast to St. Nazaire in the extreme west of France on the Atlantic seaboard.

This invasion of north-western France would have been carried out by a still larger force of the enemy, but for the action of the Belgian Army. It had been intended that as the Allies advanced into Belgium the Belgians would move out from Antwerp against Brussels, and if things had gone well they would thus have joined hands with the British left. We do not yet know what information King Albert had about the course of events at Charleroi and Mons. It is quite possible that when he ordered an advance from Antwerp on Monday, August the 24th, he had not heard of the defeat of the Allies. But however this may be, his vigorous action had some useful results. Moving out to the south and south-west of the fortress the Belgians drove in the German advanced detachments,

captured Alost, and in the first twenty-four hours made good progress towards Brussels and Louvain. The German Army of General von Böhne, which was marching by Tournai into France, was recalled to strengthen the Army of occupation in Belgium. With this help the Germans drove the Belgians back into Antwerp. But the sortie, though it had thus indirectly helped the Allies, had a lamentable sequel in Belgium itself. At Louvain, though we cannot yet be certain what exactly happened, it would seem that amidst the excitement created by rumours of a victorious Belgian advance a rash attack was made on a German detachment. The invaders took a terrible vengeance. There were wholesale executions of prisoners, and a great part of the old University town was sacked and burned. There were terrible military reprisals, though on a smaller scale, on the town of Alost, on the plea that the citizens had taken part in the fighting when the Belgian Army seized the town. In other parts of Belgium there were outrages of the same kind during the following days. The German garrisons were alarmed by the temporary success of the Belgians, and abandoned their earlier conciliatory attitude, so that for a while there was something like a reign of terror in the occupied districts.

To return to the operations of the British force. Early on the morning of Tuesday the 25th the retreat southward was continued, and the Germans began the siege of Maubeuge, and followed up the British retirement, concentrating their chief force to their own right, in the hope of getting round the British left, and cutting its line of retreat. After the heavy fighting of the last

two days the day was comparatively quiet. Our cavalry covering the retirement were in touch with the pursuing enemy, but there was no heavy fighting during the day, nevertheless it was a trying one for our men. It was a day of intense heat, and the 2nd Corps on the left had to move by dusty, sun-scorched roads. On the right the 1st Corps was more fortunate, for its line of march lay through the shady avenues of the forest of Mormal. But even here, at the end of the day's march, the men were so exhausted that they were allowed to halt for the night before all of them had reached the ground assigned originally for the end of the march. Many of the regiments did not come in until long after dark. The line taken up extended from the neighbourhood of Landrecies on the Sambre westward by Le Cateau towards Cambrai. The 4th Division of the 3rd Corps, which had joined during the day, forming the extreme left.

It was nearly nine o'clock in the evening when the last of the troops reached the position. Something was done to entrench it, but the men were too tired to complete the work. The German pursuit had been so slack that it was hoped they would have a good rest during the night, but as darkness closed in a determined attack was made by the enemy on the 1st Corps on the extreme right. The first shots were fired about half-past nine, when the Germans under cover of the darkness came pouring out of the forest of Mormal, drove in the outpost line, and rushed into the streets of Landrecies, which was held by the 4th Guards' Brigade, Grenadiers, Coldstreams and Irish. Though the attack was a surprise, the Guards made a

splendid fight at close quarters by the light of the burning houses set on fire by the German shells, and after a struggle that lasted three hours drove the enemy back into the forest. At the same time there was another attack at Maroilles further east. Here, after holding their ground for a while unaided, the British were reinforced by some of Lanzerac's battalions, and the German attack was repulsed. Long after the fighting had ended the troops stood to arms expecting that the attack would be renewed. Only towards morning were they able to obtain a brief rest, but when dawn came on the Wednesday it was evident that after this terrible night the 1st Corps was too exhausted to be put in the battle-line that day. The order was therefore given that it should at once continue the retreat southward across the Oise towards Guise, while Smith-Dorrien, with the 2nd Corps and the 4th Division, protected their retreat, falling back from position to position on the left.

Smith-Dorrien had been ordered to follow at an early hour the retirement of the 1st Corps, but he was attacked at daybreak by an overwhelming force of the enemy. At least four German Army Corps were brought into action against him, and some 600 German guns were opposed to less than 150 which he could place in line. There had been no time to entrench the position properly, but, desperate as the odds were, Smith-Dorrien felt that he must endeavour to hold his ground for a while. Until late in the afternoon he beat off attack after attack, suffering heavy loss, and finally withdrew from the position in good order, leaving to the enemy as trophies only a few guns, which had been

so shattered that they could not be moved. It was one of the hardest fights in which British troops have ever been engaged, and when the withdrawal was at last made, the Germans were working round the left flank in such numbers that further resistance would have meant that the whole force would have been enveloped and destroyed.

The cavalry and artillery covered the retreat, our horsemen making daring charges against the enemy, and frequently riding them down, and the guns coming into action again and again, checking the German advance by their rapid fire, and then galloping to a new position. In his report on the day's operations Sir John French paid a high but well-deserved tribute to Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien's leadership:—"I say without hesitation," he wrote, "that the saving of the left wing of the Army could never have been accomplished unless a commander of rare and unusual coolness, intrepidity and determination had been present to personally conduct the operation."

After fighting until late in the afternoon our men had to continue their march all through the evening and the night that followed. Long after dark the rearguard were repeatedly in action with the pursuing enemy, who captured numbers of stragglers and secured guns and waggons which broke down on the rough roads. "The march was like a nightmare," wrote one of the officers. Hungry and exhausted from want of sleep, the men plodded through the darkness, whole regiments sometimes losing their way and becoming mixed up with each other, and numbers of men falling by the roadside in utter weariness. But as

the dawn came the men pulled themselves together. Their spirit was still unbroken. Weary as they were, they heard with something like disappointment that they were not to make a stand against the Germans that day.

During the 27th and 28th, the retreat was continued towards the line of the lower Oise. Then the river was crossed, and the line of march changed, so as to move round to the south-west of Paris. There were frequent rearguard fights, the most serious of these was fought by the 1st Corps among the woods near Guise. The battle ended in an encouraging success. The Germans were driven back and two batteries were captured. It was in this fight near Guise that Colonel Morris fell at the head of the Irish Guards. A characteristic story is told of him. As the Guards moved forward to charge the enemy they were met by a tremendous outbreak of shrapnel fire. Morris turned to the men near him, and said with a laugh, "Boys, they're just trying to frighten us."

Throughout the retreat the men showed traditional British spirit of not knowing when they were beaten. They would ask the officers if the time was not come to turn on the enemy and "get a bit of their own back." Or they would say among themselves, that no doubt it was all a plan "to draw the enemy on," and compass their destruction with the help of the French. They had no idea that their French Allies had suffered a series of defeats and the British force itself had narrowly escaped destruction.

But the time was now coming for a successful rally against the invaders. In the first days of September

the German pursuit of the Allied left had been partly checked by a French Army under General D'Amade, threatening their flank to the north of Paris. A new French Army, under General Foch, had been brought up from the south to strengthen the Allied centre. On September 5th four French Armies were in line from the eastern fortresses on a front extending westwards towards Paris, south of the Marne. On the left the three British Army Corps were on the line of the Grand Morin, a tributary of the Marne, a few miles east of Paris. North of Paris, under the protection of its forts, another French Army had been concentrated to attack the German flank. On the afternoon of the 5th General Joffre met Sir John French, discussed the situation with him, and arranged for the co-operation of the British in a general advance against the Germans, which was to begin at dawn next day.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE FIRST WEEKS OF THE WAR IN EASTERN EUROPE

BEFORE following further the course of events in the West, we must see what was happening in Eastern Europe during the month of August.

The first shots were fired on the Danube on July 29th, three days before the rupture between Germany and the Franco-Russian Alliance, and a week before England entered into the war. Austria began active hostilities against Serbia on that day by bombarding Belgrade from the northern bank of the river with the co-operation of a flotilla of monitors. The Serbian Government had withdrawn from its capital, and had been transferred to Nish far away to the southward among the mountains. A mere handful of troops were left in Belgrade. It was generally anticipated that the Austrians would immediately occupy the place, but they did not get possession of it until November, and then only held it for a short time. During August the operations against Serbia were confined to skirmishing along the Danube below Belgrade, and a serious attempt to invade Serbia from northern Bosnia in the middle of the month.

On August the 12th an Austrian army; about 200,000 strong, crossed the Save and the Dwina simultaneously at several points. The left column captured the town of Shabatz; the right occupied Zvornik. But the success of the invaders was short-lived. A Serbian army, superior in numbers and largely made up of veterans from the Balkan wars, had concentrated in the hills about Kragujevatz. It marched against the Austrians, came in contact with them on the morning of the 15th, and after three days' hard fighting drove them across the frontier with heavy loss. After this defeat the Austrians contented themselves for some time with defending their own border and carrying on a desultory bombardment of Belgrade.

Montenegro had thrown in its lot with Serbia, but the small army of the mountain State accomplished very little. There were a number of raids across the Bosnian border, and though the Montenegrin Government claimed a series of victories, it is evident that no real progress was made. The objective of the Montenegrin operations was Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia. It is about forty-four miles from the Montenegrin border—or two to three days' march. But in the first six months of the war the Montenegrins were never able to seriously threaten it.

The chief service that the Serbians and Montenegrins were able to render to the Allies was to detain a large Austrian army on their borders. The intervention of Russia saved the two little States from destruction, because the Austrians had to divert the greater part of their forces to the operations in Galicia.

Early in August more than a million of the best troops of the Austro-Hungarian Army were concentrating north of the Carpathians. Germany had sent her main force to the Western frontier. At the outset her armies in the East were acting on the defensive along the frontiers of Russian Poland. Austria's part in the plan of campaign was to effect a diversion in favour of her Ally by a stroke at Russian Poland east of the Vistula, which would compel the concentration of large Russian armies for the protection of Warsaw. The whole of the Austro-German plan of campaign was based on the assumption that the Russian mobilisation would not be completed until the end of August, and the Austrian movements were so rapid that by the 10th two great armies had been pushed up to the frontier of Eastern Galicia. One of them, under General von Auffenberg, moving eastward from Lemberg, the other under General Dankl, marching on Lublin in South-Eastern Poland. But the Russians had already got together a sufficient force to oppose both these invasions, and a week earlier they had themselves taken the offensive against the Germans in East Prussia.

This invasion of East Prussia was, strictly speaking, a premature operation. It was undertaken before the general mobilisation of the Russian Armies was at all complete, and it was justified only by the hope of the Russian Staff that this menace on German territory would compel the Kaiser to send to the Eastern frontier troops that would otherwise be employed in France. It was a loyal effort of Russia to help her Allies in the West at the earliest possible moment. The first

movements took place across the East Prussian frontier while the German guns were still battering the forts of Liège. Two armies were employed in the operation. Their united strength being considerably over 300,000 men. There were two lines of invasion. The Army of the Niemen, consisting of three Corps under General Rennenkampf, crossed the Eastern frontier of Prussia marching along the railway line, from Kogno towards Königsberg—the Army of the Narev, five Corps under General Samsonov, crossed the southern frontier of the province, advancing through the difficult country of the Masurian Lakes, a region of forests, marshes, and lakes extending along the East Prussian border almost up to the Vistula at Thorn. Samsonov had at first to deal only with small detachments, holding the Passes between the lakes and swamps. Rennenkampf was opposed by a force almost equal to his own—two army corps and large bodies of Landwehr and Landsturm troops under General von François, who had occupied an entrenched position across the railway line at Gumbinnen.

Rennenkampf attacked the Gumbinnen entrenchments on August the 16th, and after four days' fighting drove the Germans from their position. This was the first important battle of the campaign. Von François retreated on Königsberg, abandoning a line of entrenchments already prepared to cover the junction at Insterburg. Rennenkampf followed him up and in a week was in front of Königsberg, and bringing up his siege guns along the railway to attack the forts. Meanwhile Samsonov had fought his way through the southern fringe of the lake country and was approaching



the railway junction at Allenstein. The two Russian Armies were kept in touch by masses of Cossack cavalry, which swept the intervening country. On their approach the people abandoned towns, villages, and farms. Many of these were burned to the ground, but it is still disputed whether this was the work of the Cossack invaders or of the Germans themselves as part of a plan to deprive the Russians of the resources of the district. Tens of thousands of fugitives crowded into the eastern cities of Germany. The greater part of East Prussia was in the hands of the enemy. Current reports at the time exaggerated the success thus easily obtained. It was confidently predicted that the Russians would cross the Lower Vistula, and would soon threaten Berlin itself. In the popular phrase of the time, "The Russian steam-roller was crushing everything before it."

But in the last week of August the situation in East Prussia was completely changed. General von Hindenburg, a veteran officer on the retired list who had during his active service commanded the Army Corps in East Prussia, and had an intimate knowledge of the country, was sent to take command of an army which was concentrating about Posen for its liberation from the invaders. About 160,000 men were assembled by drawing upon the garrisons of eastern Germany and bringing up large numbers of Reserve and Landwehr regiments. With this force Von Hindenburg moved into the lake country near Allenstein, to bar the further advance of Samsonov.

The Russians about 200,000 strong were moving on a broad front through the woods, when on August

the 26th—the day of Smith-Dorrien's battle of Le Cateau—they came in contact with Von Hindenburg's Army. The great battle which followed lasted for five days, and ended in the complete defeat of the Russians. It was the most decisive victory of the opening months of the war. Von Hindenburg enveloped the enemy on both flanks, and drove the great mass of the Russian Army into a trackless wilderness of lake and bog. Here on August the 30th, the remnant of more than three Army Corps found themselves huddled together and cut off from the rest of the army which made its retreat eastward. Samsonov and two of his corps commanders were killed, and Von Hindenburg secured 90,000 prisoners and took 500 guns.

He then marched eastward to cut the communications of Rennenkampf, who saved himself by raising the siege of Königsberg and making a hurried retirement across the frontier. In the first week of September East Prussia was clear of the enemy, and Von Hindenburg's victorious army was on Russian ground.

The failure of the Russian armies in East Prussia was, however, compensated by a series of successes in Eastern Galicia. On August the 10th the two Austrian armies of Dankl and Von Auffenberg had crossed the Russian frontier. Von Auffenberg's progress was at once checked by a Russian army under Brussilov. Dankl at first made some progress. He pushed forward towards Lublin along the east side of the Vistula, and the Russian Army of Southern Poland under Ivanov could only fight a number of rearguard actions to delay the invasion. But within a week the Austrian advance was brought to a standstill. Every day was adding

to the strength of the Russian armies, and on August the 14th a new army under General Ruzsky was moved up to the frontier on Brussilov's right, and in the next few days in co-operation with him drove Von Auffenberg steadily back upon Lemberg. This Russian advance of two armies indirectly menaced Dankl's communications, and he fell back from Lublin followed up by Ivanov. In the last week of August both the Austrian Armies suffered serious defeats. Lemberg, the capital of Galicia, was abandoned, and on September the 2nd was occupied by the Russians. The Austrians fell back towards the fortress of Przemyśl on the river San, and southwards towards the Carpathian Passes.

Thus after about a month of war the Germans had secured a great success in East Prussia, and at the other end of the Russian front the Austrians had suffered two great defeats, and the Russians were in possession of Lemberg and the whole of Eastern Galicia. In Central Poland there had been no events of importance. In the first days of the war German detachments had occupied some of the frontier towns, but in the great tract of country west of the Vistula, the Russians had at this time only relatively small forces, chiefly mounted detachments. The Grand Duke Nicholas, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies, was completing their concentration behind the Vistula under the shelter of the Polish fortresses, and using the first forces that were mobilized for the operations on the two flanks against the Austrians in Galicia, and the Germans in East Prussia. After the failure of Rennenkampf's raid on the latter province the



Russian armies in the north confined themselves for a while to the defence of the line of the river Niemen. The Russian staff attached the chief importance to the southern operations in Galicia. Here Hungary could be menaced by an attack through the Carpathian Passes, and the march on Cracow, if successful, might have decisive results. It would enable Germany itself to be invaded through the important industrial and mining district of southern Silesia, and the conquest of this region would threaten both Vienna and Berlin. Between the western Carpathians and the mountain barriers of Bohemia, there is a wide depression known to military geographers as the Moravian Gap. Through this opening lies the shortest and easiest way from Russian Poland to Vienna. It was by this line that in 1806 the Russian Armies advanced to co-operate with the Austrians in an attempt to drive the French from Vienna, and the battlefield of Austerlitz at the southern opening of the Moravian Gap marks its strategic importance. But the possession of Silesia would also open the way to Berlin, for by a march by Breslau down the Oder Valley, a Russian Army of invasion would turn—or in more familiar language get behind the whole barrier line of fortresses that protect the eastern frontier of Germany. It will be seen, therefore, that the Russians had good reason for attaching supreme importance to the campaign in Galicia, which had opened so successfully. If the victories already won there could be followed up, they might neglect the failure in East Prussia as a matter of secondary importance, and even disregard for the present the defence of western Poland, treating the

line of the Vistula as the frontier to be held in this region in the opening stages of the war.

It had been part of the Austro-German plan of operations against Russia to endeavour to incite an insurrection in Poland. As a counter-stroke against the efforts of the two Powers to promote an anti-Russian agitation among the Poles, the Czar on August the 15th issued a proclamation promising that on the successful conclusion of the war he would confer Home Rule upon Poland, reconstituting a Polish kingdom under the Russian protectorate, and giving full civil and religious liberty to the Polish people. It was implied, though not stated in so many words, that he hoped to unite to the new Poland thus created the Polish provinces of Austria and Germany.

## CHAPTER X

### THE WAR AT SEA

MONTHS before there was any idea that the summer of 1914 would witness the outbreak of a great European War, the British Admiralty had decided that, in order to test the organisation of the Fleet, there should be in July, instead of the annual manœuvres, a general mobilisation and a review of the Fleet by the King at Portsmouth, after which the squadrons would disperse for tactical exercises.

On July 15th the King reviewed the great fleet in the Solent. It lay at its moorings in five lines of ships, each eight miles long, the most powerful fleet the world had ever seen, and numbering among its units new forms of naval power in the flotilla of submarines and the squadrons of seaplanes for aerial warfare at sea.

The fleet steamed out past the Royal yacht with the submarines awash, and the aircraft hovering high above the masts and funnels. No one who witnessed the magnificent spectacle anticipated that within three weeks our navy would be engaged in active hostilities. It is true that there was tension between Austria and Serbia, but there was a general hope that even if there

was war on the Danube, it would be a local conflict. But eight days after the naval review the Austrian ultimatum was delivered at Belgrade.

On August 1st the great war had begun, and there was a growing danger that Britain would be involved in it. As a precautionary measure all the naval reserves were called up, and next day the battle fleets were ordered to proceed to the North Sea. Thus even before the rupture took place, the fleet was in complete readiness. At 11 p.m. on August 4th, England was at war. Before midnight our submarines were well out in the North Sea watching Heligoland and the German coast from Cuxhaven to the Ems.

The first fighting took place on the following morning, when the light cruiser *Amphion*, with a flotilla of destroyers, caught and sank the German minelayer *Königin Luise* off the Norfolk coast. This first success was followed within twenty-four hours by our first loss, the *Amphion* being blown up while endeavouring to destroy the minefield laid by the *Königin Luise* off Aldeburgh. These incidents were typical of new methods which played a great part in the naval war. In the war between Japan and Russia a few years before both sides had made free use of explosive mines laid in the open sea, and it was well known that in case of war with England it would be part of the German naval plan of campaign to use mines freely in order to endanger the movements of our warships and the merchantmen bringing supplies into the country. Powerful as the German fleet was, it was not strong enough to risk a battle against our enormously superior numbers. The German plan, therefore, was to keep

the Fleet in safety in its fortified harbours, and use the Kiel Canal in order to secure the command of the Southern Baltic against the inferior Russian fleet. Meanwhile, an attempt would be made to diminish British sea superiority by a guerilla warfare of mine-layers and submarines in the North Sea, while at the same time, the German cruisers and armed liners endeavoured to interrupt our lines of supply on the great trade routes of the ocean.

Most of the German cruisers were in port in Europe when the war began. The situation might have been more difficult if they had been dispersed among distant naval bases. There were two or three German warships in the Atlantic, and these were reinforced by merchantmen of the liner class, either mounting an armament already on board, or being converted into cruisers in German colonial ports. But the chief force for the war on British commerce was supplied by the German Pacific squadron, which was at Kiao-Chau in China when the war began. On the rupture with Japan the squadron left Kiao-Chau, and dispersed in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. It was made up of the powerful armoured cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and the light cruisers *Emden*, *Königsberg*, *Leipzig*, and *Nürnberg*.

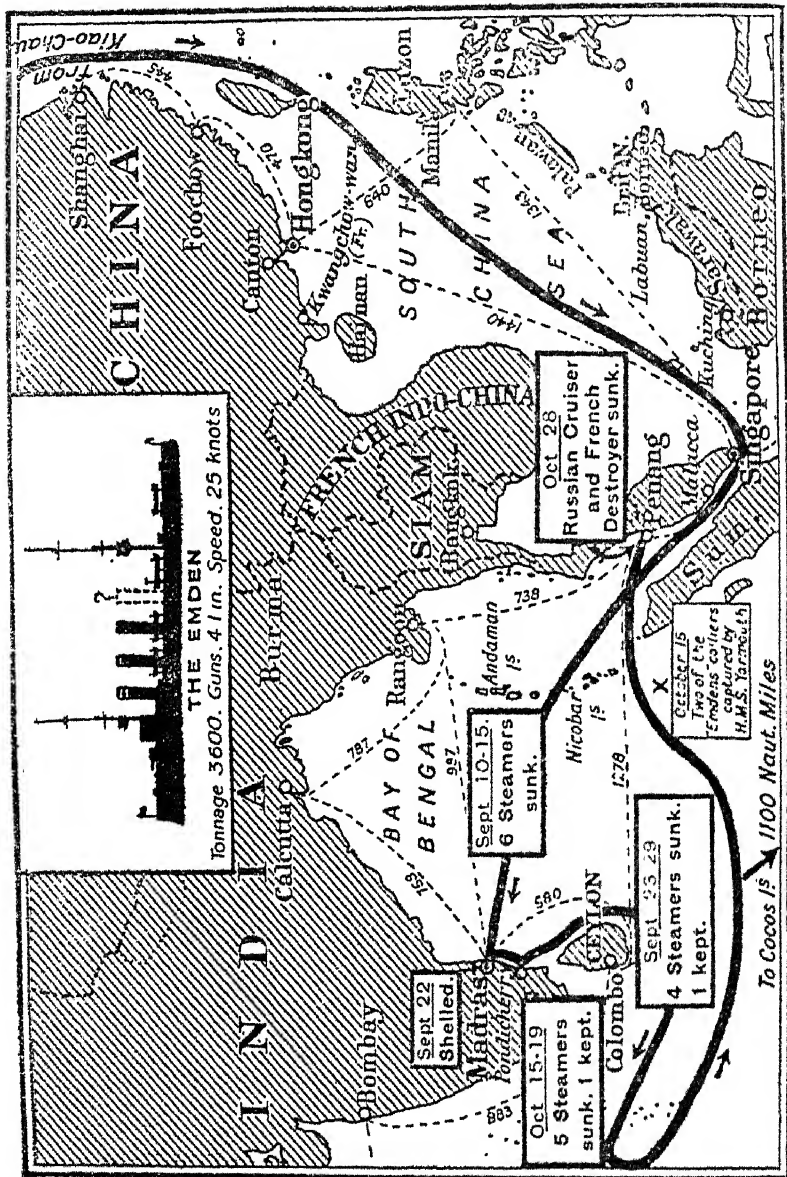
Of these the *Emden* was the most enterprising, and destined to be famous. She was not heard of for some weeks after leaving Kiao-Chau, but early in September she appeared in the Bay of Bengal, sunk six steamers, appeared off Madras on the 22nd, and shelled and burned the oil stores of the port, and then ran down to Ceylon, and captured four more steamers to the south of it.

For some days, no ship ventured to leave Calcutta. The *Emden* disappeared for awhile, and was next heard of capturing steamers on the Aden-Bombay trade route. By this time several warships were looking for her. On October the 16th H.M.S. *Yarmouth* captured two of her attendant colliers off the north end of Sumatra, and it was expected the *Emden* would be discovered in that neighbourhood. On the 28th she performed her most daring exploit, running into the harbour of Penang, and sinking with torpedo and gun-fire the Russian cruiser *Jemchug*, and a French destroyer *Mousquet*.

From Penang the *Emden*, evading pursuit, got out again into the Indian Ocean, and on November the 11th she appeared off Cocos Island, and landed a party to destroy the wireless station there. Before this was effected the operator was able to send out a call for help, and the result was that the *Emden* was attacked off the island by the Australian cruiser *Sydney*, driven ashore and burned.

The *Königsberg* had been cruising in the South Indian Ocean. On September the 20th she sank the old gunboat *Pegasus* off Zanzibar. At the end of October she was chased by H.M.S. *Chatham*, and blockaded in the Rufiji river.

The *Karlsruhe* had been busy in the Atlantic, assisted by a number of armed liners. All these, except the warship, were hunted down by the middle of September. On August the 27th the armed liner *Wilhelm der Grosse* was sunk by H.M.S. *Highflyer* off the West African coast. On September the 7th the *Bethania* was captured by H.M.S. *Essex* in West



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THE RAIDS OF THE EMDEN.

Indian waters, and five days later H.M.S. *Berwick* took the *Spreewald* in the North Atlantic. Finally, on September the 14th the armed liner *Cap Trafalgar* was sunk by the armed Cunard liner *Carmania* after an hour's fighting off the coast of Brazil. The *Karlsruhe* was still at liberty, and was joined by an armed liner, the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*. But the trade routes were now kept safe by patrolling and the huge fleet of transports which brought the Canadian contingent to England never even saw the smoke of an enemy's cruiser.

For a while the four remaining ships of the Kiao-Chau squadron were active in the South Pacific. Their exploits and their fates will be told in a later chapter. Here we need only note that in a few weeks the seas had been almost completely swept of hostile cruisers and the enemy's commerce had been brought to a standstill. The losses they had inflicted on our trade were much slighter than had been anticipated, and the sea-borne commerce of the Empire went on safely under the protection of the Navy.

When war was declared two powerful German ships, the battle-cruiser *Goeben* and the armoured cruiser *Breslau* were in the Mediterranean. Their presence might have been dangerous to the transport of Algerian troops to France, and in the first days of the war they made their presence felt by throwing a few shells into North African ports. They were chased by a combined French and British squadron, and escaped capture by running into the Dardanelles. They were somewhat irregularly transferred to the Turkish flag, and there is no doubt that their presence in Turkish waters was a powerful factor in the German policy of inducing the



Ottoman Government to declare war against Russia and her Western Allies. The Austrian fleet, small in numbers, but efficient in *matériel* and *personnel*, was shut up in the Adriatic by the Allied Fleets.

We now return to the events in the North Sea. Here the work of the Navy was to keep a watch on the enemy's naval bases, be ready to bring the German battle fleet to action if it ventured out, prevent reinforcements being sent to the commerce raiders, and deal with the attempts of the enemy to destroy British ships by submarines or mine-laying. At the same time care had to be taken that no attacks were made upon the transports and store ships which were continually crossing the Channel. All this meant ceaseless vigilance, and large numbers of cruisers and light craft had to keep the sea in all kinds of weather. To deal with the danger from mines a flotilla of steam trawlers was organised, manned by fishermen, who had all their lives been used to working long nets. These were employed in couples dragging for and fishing up the enemy's mines, a dangerous work in which many of these brave men lost their lives.

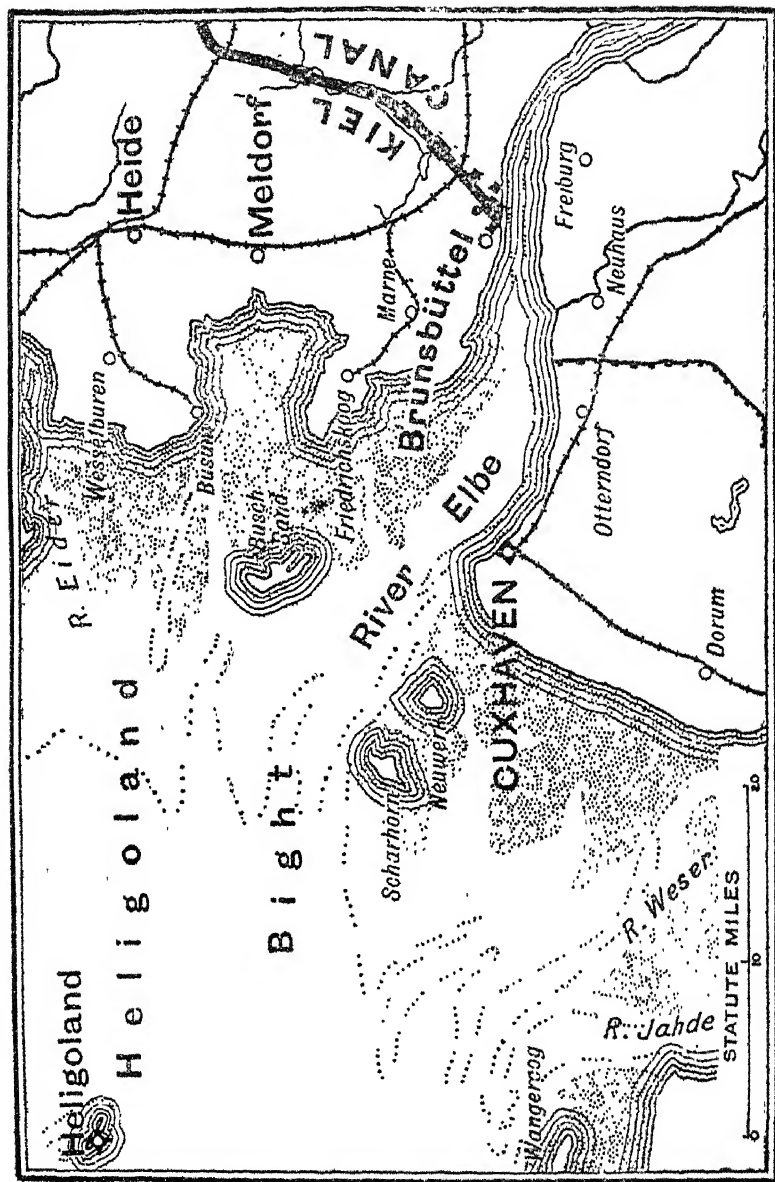
At first the danger from the enemy's submarines was underrated. Germany had been one of the last Powers to adopt this new weapon, and it was not thought that her sailors would be very expert in handling it. This optimist view was confirmed for a while by the destruction of a submarine by H.M.S. *Birmingham* in the first days of the war. During August the German submarines scored no success. On the 28th there came welcome proof that the gun had still a decisive voice in naval war. That morning a light squadron of our

small cruisers, torpedo-destroyers, and submarines forced a German squadron of cruisers and lighter craft to battle in the Bight of Heligoland, almost within gunshot of the island. In the later stage of the fight Rear-Admiral Beatty, who commanded in the action, brought his big battle cruisers up to support the smaller ships, but these had already inflicted severe damage on the enemy. The good gunnery of our men proved the decisive factor. A German destroyer and three cruisers (the *Köln*, *Mainz*, and *Ariadne* were sunk) without the loss of a single ship on our side.

So the first month of the war closed with a big success. In August we had bottled up the main German fleet, beaten one of its light squadrons, swept German commerce from the seas, and made the ocean routes almost as safe as in peace time for our commerce.

In September, however, a more successful activity of the enemy's submarines began, and his mine-layers managed to make parts of the home seas unsafe at times. On the 7th the old *Pathfinder* was destroyed by a submarine off the Scottish coast. A few days before this the gunboat *Speedy* had been sunk by a mine. A much heavier loss came on the 22nd, when a German submarine sank the three armoured cruisers, *Aboukir*, *Cressy*, and *Hogue* off the Dutch coast. After this the Admiralty reluctantly gave orders for the seas outside the Goodwins to be mined in order to hamper hostile approach to the Channel, and all shipping was directed to enter the North Sea by the Downs.

None of the ships we had lost were of recent construction, and regrettable as such incidents were, they did not affect the enormous preponderance of our



THE HELIGOLAND BIGHT.

naval power. Our squadrons of light craft swept the North Sea and once at least our main battle fleet cruised off the Bight of Heligoland and vainly challenged the enemy to come out to battle. Our sailors, too, carried on a guerilla warfare against the Germans. A British submarine twice sank an enemy's ship close in to his coast, and the Royal Marines, having occupied Ostend, the Naval Flying Corps established a base there from which raids of their aeroplanes were pushed as far as the Rhine, destroying in one of these expeditions the Zeppelin sheds at Düsseldorf.

On October 16th the old cruiser *Hawke* was torpedoed in the North Sea. But next morning we scored a success, a squadron of our destroyers intercepting four German ships of the same class off Heligoland and sinking every one of them in a running fight that lasted about an hour, and at the end of October a British squadron acted with decisive effect against the German flank in Belgium, as we shall see in a later chapter.

Thus in the first three months, despite some minor losses, which are inevitable in every conflict on land or sea, our Navy had asserted its superiority over the enemy in the Home Seas as well as in distant oceans. We held the command of the sea from the first hour of the war, and we held it practically without challenge.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE WORLD-WIDE ASPECT OF THE WAR

IN dealing with the work of the Navy we have seen how the protection of British commerce, and the hunting down of the enemy's cruisers entailed naval operations not only in the North Sea, but in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. But there was also in the first months of the war a series of operations against the German colonies in various parts of the world and, when Turkey threw in its lot with Germany at the end of October, there were military operations on a large scale in the Persian Gulf, and preparations had to be made for the defence of Egypt against the Turkish raid.

It will be convenient here to note the essential facts as to the events of the war outside Europe in the period covered by our narrative.

The first blow was struck at German power in the heart of Africa. On Lake Nyassa, the shores of which were touched by both British and German colonial possessions, each power maintained a small armed steamer for patrol work on the lake. The British authorities received news of the outbreak of the war in Europe a few hours before the warning reached the

Germans, and the enemy's gunboat, the *Wissmann*, was surprised and captured by the other steamer. She was at the time laid up for repairs to her engines, and had to surrender on the appearance of her rival. In fact the German officers received the news of the outbreak of war from the officer who brought the summons to surrender. It was only after they had handed over their ship that a native runner brought them the news from their own government.

The Germans in East Africa, as soon as they received the warning, prepared not only to defend themselves but to attack the neighbouring colony of British East Africa. Their first effort ended in failure. An armed party, sent out northwards to cut the line of the Uganda railway, missed its way. The raiders had to cross a desert district, where their success depended upon their finding a well or water-hole at the end of each day's march. Misled by an inefficient guide they left the track, were for nearly two days without water, and finally came into an English post in an exhausted condition and surrendered.

After this there was an unfortunate failure of a British raid on the coast. An expedition from India, made up of a European and five native regiments, was disembarked on November 1st to march upon and capture the German port and railway terminus at Tanga. The strength of the enemy's force in the district had been under-estimated, and the troops marching through difficult tropical bush country, came in contact with superior numbers in carefully prepared positions. After a hard fight, in which a good deal of loss was incurred, the troops retreated to the coast

and re-embarked. . The force was landed again for the defence of British East Africa. The Germans, in their turn, sent raiding parties across the British border, but all these were defeated by the local forces of native troops and white volunteers.

On the other side of the African continent a mixed British and French force entered Togoland on August 26th. The small German force in the colony retreated into the interior, and the country was declared by proclamation to be British territory. At the same time a British force entered the adjacent German colony of the Cameroons. Thanks to our preponderant naval power, the stations on the coast were easily captured, but the Germans with their native troops retired inland, and made a persistent resistance in entrenched positions. Here at the end of the year the situation in Europe was repeated on a smaller scale. The rival British and German colonial forces were solidly entrenched close to each other, and were carrying on a desultory warfare interrupted by informal truces, when the tropical weather and the difficult conditions of the country made both equally tired of active operations.

In South Africa, on the declaration of war, the Prime Minister, General Botha, had mobilised the local force and announced that immediate steps would be taken to invade and occupy German South Africa. On September 18th a naval force occupied without opposition the port of the German colony, Luderitz Bay. This was intended to have been a prelude to the invasion of the enemy's territory by two simultaneous expeditions, one from the sea coast, the other from the land

frontier in the Upington district of Cape Colony. But active operations had to be deferred for some time on account of the outbreak of a rebellion in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. It was the only disloyal act that marred the union of the whole empire in the presence of the enemy. The movement was never important, and it was really the outcome of local political dissensions. The rebellion was inspired by the jealousy of some of the opposition leaders against General Botha. There was a small party in the northern states of the South African Union which rallied to a group of leaders who declared that, while the territories of the Union should be defended against any German aggression, an effort should be made to keep South Africa free from active hostilities, and if the Germans did not invade British territory no attack should be made upon them. They argued that the fate of the colony would finally be decided by the events of the war in Europe, and that local hostilities were an unnecessary evil. On the other hand General Botha, as the head of the government, took the line that Germany had a formidable force in South Africa, and until it was dealt with it would be impossible for the forces of the South African Union, like those of all the other dominions, to send a contingent to assist the Mother Country at the principal seat of war in western Europe. With this larger end in view it was impossible to avoid an attack upon the German possession in South West Africa.

The rebellion was never formidable. It had few adherents, and their movements were badly combined and were not even simultaneous. A small body of



burghers on the Upington frontier went over to the enemy. General Beyers, one of the most noted leaders in the Boer War of 1899, and the Commandant of the Union defence forces, had been appointed to command the expedition against German South-west Africa. He resigned his command, and soon after joined the famous Christian De Wet in an attempt to create a general rising of the Boer burghers against the British. Very few joined Beyers and De Wet, and General Botha took the field against them in person, and in less than a month the rebel commandos had been broken up, and were reduced to handfuls of fugitives endeavouring to escape capture, and finding that no one was willing to join them. The movement had begun on October 13th, and by Christmas the last of the rebels had been captured or disarmed. Beyers was drowned whilst fording a river in his flight from the Government forces, De Wet was captured with a few companions. In the old war against the British he had again and again evaded capture, but he was then pursued only by mounted men who did not possess his knowledge of the country. In his attempt at flight after the failure of the rebellion he was hunted down by armed parties conveyed by motor-cars, and he and his friends had soon to abandon their horses, and attempt to hide. The result of the rebellion was to demonstrate that the great mass of the Boer people were loyal to the empire, and its chief effect was to delay for a while the invasion of the German colony, and the proposed embarkation of a South African contingent for Europe.

In Australia and New Zealand, on the declaration of war, preparations were at once made for sending

colonial contingents to Europe. At the same time small expeditions were equipped to take possession of the German colonies in the Pacific. German Samoa was occupied without resistance in the last week of August. The troops employed were supplied by the New Zealand forces, and the expedition calling on the way at New Caledonia, had to make a voyage of nearly two thousand miles. The naval force that convoyed the transports was made up of six warships, the three cruisers of the New Zealand division, *Psyche*, *Pyramus* and *Philomel*, the cruisers of the Australian Commonwealth, *Australia* and *Melbourne*, and the French cruiser *Montcalm*.

On September 11th an Australian naval brigade was landed at dawn on the island of New Pommern, the largest of the Bismarck archipelago. The object of the expedition was to destroy the local wireless station which was used to send information and orders to the enemy's cruisers in the Pacific. Further, the town of Herbertshöhe was to be attacked. This was the seat of the German colonial government for New Pommern, German New Guinea, and the Carolina and Marshall Islands. The landing was unopposed, but the capture of Herbertshöhe was only effected after eighteen hours of hard fighting. The capture of New Pommern was followed by the unopposed occupation of German New Guinea by an Australian force. A Japanese naval squadron at the same time took possession of the Marshall Islands, but subsequently handed them over to an Australian garrison.

On August 16th the Japanese Government sent an ultimatum to Germany demanding the surrender of the

naval station of Kiao-Chau in the province of Shantung, and the withdrawal of the German forces from the Far East. A week was given for a reply, and on the expiration of that time war was declared against Germany. On August 27th Kiao-Chau was blockaded by a Japanese squadron. On October 1st the troops destined for the attack of the fortress began to land, and they were soon after joined by a British brigade from India. Attacked by land and sea, the German garrison made an honourable resistance, but on the fall of the outer forts on November 7th the place capitulated. This completed the expulsion of Germany from all her possessions in the Pacific.

Turkey had declared war against the Allies at the end of October, and concentrated an army about Maan, near the head of the Red Sea, and on the line of the Damascus-Mecca railway. This force was destined for the invasion of Egypt by a march across the Sinai desert. The plan of invasion was based upon a hope that there would be a mutiny of the Egyptian Army and a popular rising against England at Cairo and along the Nile. But order in Egypt was absolutely undisturbed, and the British Government had the full approval of the people when it announced the deposition of the Khedive Abbas, on account of his intrigues with Germany, and proclaimed a prince of his family Sultan of an independent Egypt under the protection of Britain. The defence of the country was provided for by reinforcements from many parts of the Empire. Territorial regiments were sent out from England, native troops were brought from India, and the Australian contingent, originally destined for Europe, dis-



embarked in Egypt. After long delays, the German officers who were directing the operations of the Army collected at Maan, succeeded in bringing about 20,000 men across the Sinai desert, but on November 20th an attempt of the Turks to force the crossing of the Suez Canal at Toussoun, near Ismailia, was easily defeated with heavy losses to the invaders, and the remnant of the beaten army retreated across the desert.

Meanwhile an Expeditionary Force from India had been sent to the Persian Gulf. It disembarked under cover of the escorting squadron at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab, the broad stream by which the united Euphrates and Tigris flow to the sea. A Turkish Army which tried to bar the advance of the expedition up the river was defeated, and on November 21st Basra, the great commercial centre of the country, was successfully occupied. The conquest of the lower Euphrates put an end once and for all to the project on which Germany had been busy for years of a railway by Bagdad to the Persian Gulf, which would make German trade interests predominant in Western Asia.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE BATTLES OF THE MARNE AND THE AISNE

ON September 3rd, the French Government was removed from Paris to Bordeaux. Its withdrawal was an admission that the capital was in danger of an attack by the advancing invaders, and there was something like a panic in the city. More than half a million of the Parisians fled by road and rail to the south and west. General Gallieni had been appointed military governor of Paris, and was organising the defences, no easy task, for the fortifications had been neglected for years, and even the necessary material for the work to be done was deficient. Several thousands of buildings in the neighbouring country were demolished to clear the field of fire of the forts, and preparations were made for blowing up the bridges. North of the city hostile patrols penetrated within twenty miles of the forts, but within three days of the departure of the Government for Bordeaux, Paris heard with relief that Von Kluck's Army which, till then, had been marching directly on Paris, had turned south-eastward across the Marne about Meaux.

It was said at the time that there had been a sudden change in the German plans. This was not really

the case. The invaders could not attack Paris until they had disposed of the Allied field armies. If these could be defeated in a decisive battle, the fall of Paris would be practically assured, for its forts could offer no prolonged resistance to the giant howitzers that had wrecked the more modern defences of Liège and Namur in a few days. Von Kluck was closing to his left to keep touch with the next German army under Von Bülow in a general attack on the Allies south of the Marne. The Germans counted on an easy victory. For nearly a fortnight they had been in pursuit of opponents who never stood for more than a few hours, and they thought the Allies were thoroughly beaten, and that it wanted only one more blow to complete their destruction.

But as we have seen, the Allied armies had been reinforced, and notwithstanding the failure on the frontier and the long retreat, the spirit of both the British and the French troops was unbroken. General Joffre, instead of awaiting attack south of the Marne, was preparing to assume the offensive and march against the enemy. On the evening of September 5th, after his conference with Sir John French, Joffre issued orders for a general advance at dawn next morning.

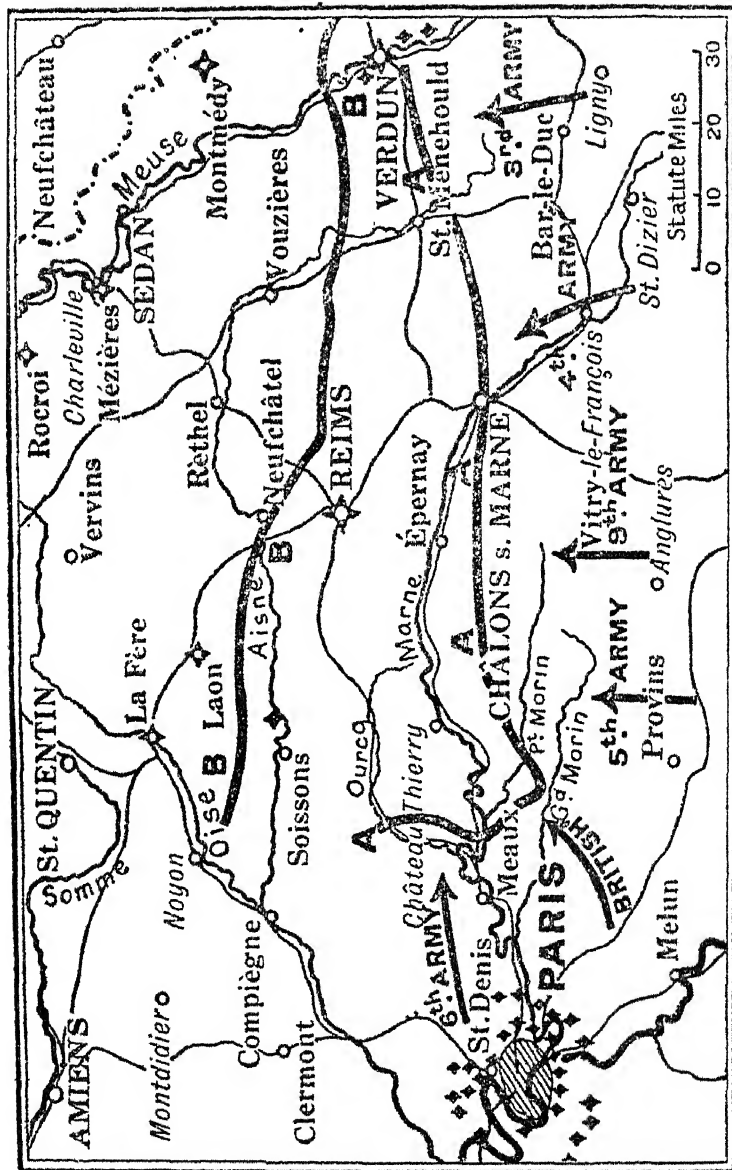
The series of battles lasting for several days on a front of more than 120 miles, which is known as "the Battle of the Marne," began in the early hours of Sunday, September 6th. The British and French aviators had watched the movements of the enemy, and all their positions were well known. As he crossed the Marne above Meaux, Von Kluck had left a strong force along the line of its tributary,

the Ourcq, facing towards Paris, to protect his right flank. Against this flank the Allies delivered a converging attack of two armies. The 6th French Army, under General Manoury, had been massed under the protection of the northern forts of Paris, and was pushed forward along the right bank of the Marne against the line of the Ourcq. At the same time the British Army changed front to its right, and attacked the flank and front of Von Kluck's columns, as they moved southward from the crossings of the Marne. Further east, the advance of the French centre was directed on Rheims, and between the Upper Marne and the eastern fortresses, Sarraill's Army attacked the German left under the Crown Prince.

The battle lasted for five days. On the Sunday the enemy's advance was checked on the Allied left along the Grand Morin. Next day the British and French were across the river. A good deal of ground was won, and for the first time in the campaign the Allies were advancing, and the Germans, though fighting obstinately, were being forced to give ground.

Tuesday, the 8th, was the day that saw the complete turn of the tide. All along the line on the left and centre the Allies were pushing forward and forcing the enemy back towards the Marne. So far the weather had been fine with scorching days and cloudless night. On the evening of the 8th, there was a sudden change, and during the night that followed the rain came down in a deluge. The Prussian Guard Corps, which had been driven back on the 8th by Foch's Army across the upper course of the Petit Morin, bivouacked on the wide meadows, known





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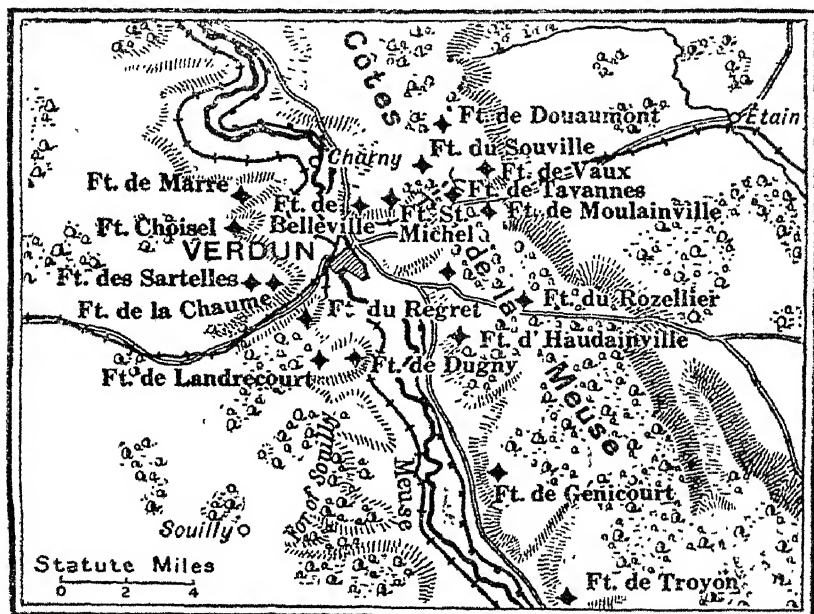
# BATTLES OF THE MARNE AND THE AISNE.

A.A. German front on Sept. 6th. The arrows indicate direction of the advance of the Allied Armies.  
 B.B. German front in the Battle of the Aisne.

as the Marshes of St. Gond, south of Epernay. The ground is an open upland once a region of morasses, but in the last fifty years converted into pasture land by extensive drainage operations. After heavy rain, however, it resumes something of its old character, and on the morning of the 9th, the Germans found it was impossible to move whole batteries of their guns from the rain-sodden fields. The guns had to be abandoned to the advancing French, and were sent to Paris as the first trophies of the campaign.

On the 9th the Germans retired across the Marne, blowing up the bridges, and making an obstinate defence at all the points of crossing. In the night, however, the Allies bridged the river at several places, and next morning the Germans were in full retreat northwards. During the day they abandoned the lower course of the Ourcq, and fell back northwards towards the Aisne. That day there were many captures of guns and prisoners. To delay the pursuit of the Allies the invaders left strong rearguards behind them, with orders in some cases not to follow the retreat, but to fight on till they were killed or captured. The numbers of prisoners taken, the large quantities of transport abandoned by the enemy, and the fact that they nowhere made a successful stand, conveyed the impression that the German Army was thoroughly beaten. This was not really the case. A great victory had been won, but the enemy's main force was still unbroken, and instead of abandoning the invasion of France, the Germans were retiring to a new position extending along the north bank of the Aisne, eastwards to near Verdun.

On the Allied right Sarraill had driven back the Crown Prince into the woods of the Argonne, and his success had come just in time to save the fort of Troyon, south of Verdun. The Germans had attacked it with their heavy field howitzers, and the little garrison was holding out amid the ruins of the central



VERDUN AND FORT TROYON.

work when the advance of the victorious French drove away the besiegers. In the centre, Foch had re-occupied Rheims, which the Germans abandoned without an attempt at defence. They retired to the north bank of the little river Suippe, which runs into the Aisne north of Rheims.

All these were solid successes, but the chief point was that the tide of German victory had been broken. It was now impossible to carry out the original programme of crushing France by a series of rapid blows, and then sending the best of the German Army eastward to deal with Russia. The Germans were now reduced for a while to the defensive. The utmost they were aiming at was to hold as much as possible of the ground they had won in their first rush across the frontiers.

The position they had selected for their stand was admirably chosen. On their extreme right Von Kluck held the line of wooded heights that extends along the north bank of the Aisne from near its confluence with the Oise. These heights end near the village of Craonne, famous as the scene of one of Napoleon's last victories. The line was then prolonged by Berry-au-Bac on the Marne, where the road from Rheims to Laon crosses the river, then along the Aisne and the Suippe eastward to the wooded heights of the Argonne, which were held by the left under the Crown Prince. At first it was supposed that the Germans were only making a stand on this line in order to fight a great rearguard action, which would be a prelude to a further retirement. In order to hasten their withdrawal and convert it into a rout, General Joffre decided to attack the enemy's right on the heights of the Aisne. This task was confided to three armies, the 6th French Army under Manoury on the extreme left, from Soissons to the Oise, the British under Sir John French, east of Soissons, and the 5th French Army now commanded by General

D'Esperey on French's right towards the crossing of the river near Craonne.

On September 13th, the Allies closed up to the river, and the battle of the Aisne began on Saturday, the 14th. The first operation was a most difficult one. A wide river had to be bridged under the fire of the enemy holding the heights beyond it. Along a front of more than forty miles, the Germans had only left one bridge standing, and this was at the village of Condé, where the crossing could be completely commanded by a cross-fire from heights rising abruptly from the river-bank. The French succeeded in the afternoon in getting two pontoon bridges across the river, west of Soissons. Immediately to the east of the city most of the attempts to cross failed. The British engineers worked all day under a heavy fire, and it was only late in the afternoon that they were able to get a small force across here and there with pontoons or rafts. Further west, on the British right, where Sir Douglas Haig with the 1st Corps was engaged, a crossing was effected at several points. At Pont Arcy the men clambered over the wreckage of an iron bridge. In the middle of the river the broken girders were under water, and they had to wade over waist-deep. At Bourg, to the east of Pont Arcy, a canal crossed the Aisne by an aqueduct, with a broad tow-path. The enemy did not make a very obstinate defence here. The tow-path was stormed, and pontoon bridges were got across beside the aqueduct. By means of these the 1st Division crossed the river, and in the afternoon fought its way up the lower slopes of the heights beyond. D'Esperey, on the

right, was able to force a crossing at several points, and by nightfall about half of the three Allied Armies was over the Aisne. The fact that such a strong line had been forced in a single day, gave the Allied Generals the impression that the Germans did not intend to make a prolonged stand, and that a determined attack on the heights next morning would again compel their retreat.

But the German line of defence was not really the river. This they treated only as a preliminary obstacle. They were heavily entrenching themselves along the wooded crests of the heights in positions that the lie of the ground and the scattered clumps of forest made it difficult or impossible to observe from the south bank of the Aisne. The strength of the position was revealed when it was attacked on the morning of Sunday, the 15th. The only ground won that day was on the right, where Haig was able to establish himself on the upper slopes of the plateau within short range of the German trenches, though he was unable anywhere to break into the enemy's main line. The fighting was renewed on the Monday, but it was only gradually that it was realised that the enemy had converted the crests of the Aisne plateau into an improvised fortress armed with heavy artillery, including the siege guns, which had been sent down from Maubeuge. That fortress had been forced to surrender in the first days of September, and its fall had set free some 40,000 men to reinforce the enemy's battle line.

To hold the ground they had won, the Allies entrenched themselves along the slopes of the heights,

and the fighting on the Aisne became, more like a siege than a battle. On the French right towards Verdun, Sarraïl in the same way found that the Crown Prince's Army had entrenched itself in the woods of the Argonne, and the fighting here too became a long series of siege operations, which was to last for months. In the centre during the attack on the Aisne heights, the Germans gained some ground in the neighbourhood of Rheims. After repulsing an attack on their positions along the north bank of the Suippe, they pushed forward towards the city, and captured the heights of Brimont to the north of it, and of Nogent-l'Abbesse to the east. On these hills they mounted long-ranging siege guns, and began a bombardment of the city, in which its world-famous cathedral suffered deplorable damage. Around Rheims the French entrenched themselves and here, as on the rest of the long line, there began a deadlock which lasted all through the winter.

On September 18th, General Joffre announced to Sir John French a change of plans. He had realised that the Germans' positions were too strong to be forced by a mere frontal attack, and he had decided to attempt to turn them by advancing from the westward across the Oise against the flank and rear of the enemy. As a first stage in this operation, Manoury was directed to push northwards along the right bank of the Oise towards Noyon. De Castelnau, who had successfully defended Nancy, was given the command of another army, which was assembled by rail to the north of Paris, and was to operate on Manoury's left. A third army was being concentrated at Amiens.

It was confidently anticipated that this flank attack by three new armies would force the Germans to abandon their line of defence. But it was obvious that such an operation might be attempted by the French, and the German Staff was aware of it almost as soon as it had begun, and took prompt measures to parry the blow by extending the battle line from its extreme right on the Oise northwards towards the Belgian frontier. We shall see that within less than four weeks the battle line extended not only to Belgium, but to the Channel coast.





it. The defence of the river line was therefore comparatively an easy task, and Rennenkampf was heavily reinforced by the new troops which had joined as the mobilisation progressed. All Von Hindenburg's attempts to cross the Niemen were defeated with heavy loss, and on September 18th he began to retreat towards his own frontier. It was the same day on which, in the West, General Joffre decided that the Aisne positions could not be forced from the front, and began the attempted turning movement from the West.

The Russians crossed the Niemen to harass the retreat of the Germans. On September 25th Von Hindenburg stopped his retirement and made a stand in the Augustovo forests. There was more than a week of hard fighting in the woods with heavy loss on both sides. Then in the first days of October the Germans fell back across the East Prussian frontier, and began a successful defence of the entrenched passes of firm land between the Masurian Lakes and marshes. A mild winter, in which the lakes were never frozen over with firm ice, enabled this defence to be prolonged into the new year.

At the other extremity of the Russian line, in Galicia, the armies of the Czar made rapid progress after the fall of Lemberg. By the middle of September, Ivanov's army had driven the Austrians across the river San and occupied Jaroslav, leaving a force under the Bulgarian General Dimitrieff to besiege the fortress of Przemsyl, which was invested for the first time on September 28th. Ivanov pushed westward towards Cracow, while Brussilov's army entered the Carpathian Passes, drove back the Austrian detachments defending

the eastern defiles of the range and penetrated into Hungary.

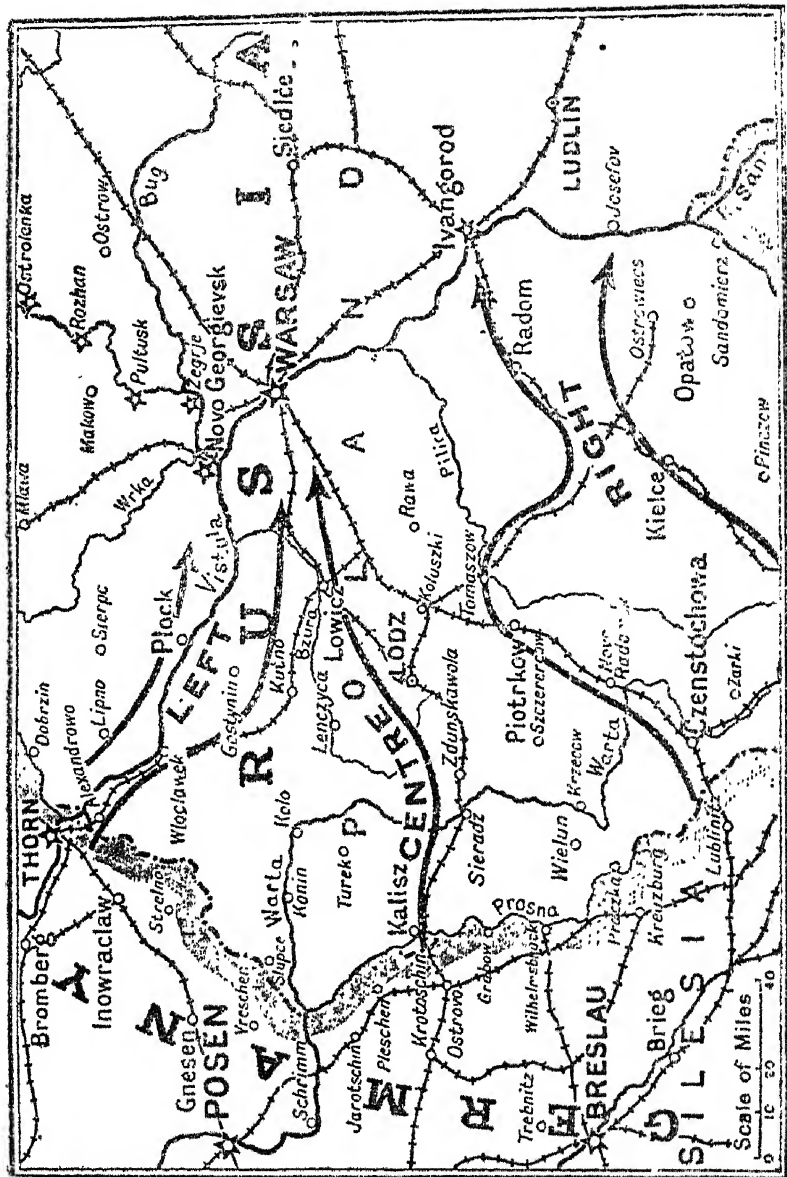
This raid over the Carpathians was a minor operation intended chiefly to cause alarm at Budapest, and force the enemy to hold back from the main theatre of war in Galicia large numbers of the Honveds—the Hungarian Territorials—for the defence of their own country. The main object of the Russians was now the capture of Cracow—a task committed to the two armies of Ivanov and Ruzsky. The occupation of Cracow would have a great moral effect in Poland. It is the city where the Polish kings were crowned, and its cathedral is full of their tombs. It is in fact the Westminster of Poland. But besides this such a success would have important military results. The possession of Cracow would open the way to Vienna by the gap between the Carpathians and the Bohemian mountains, and also expose to invasion the rich industrial and mining districts of Prussian Silesia and enable the Russian army to turn both the Eastern line of fortresses of Germany and the natural line of defence of the river Oder.

In the third week of September the Russians marching westward captured the important railway centre at Tarnow. A few days later they were closing in upon the north and east of Cracow, and the fortress was preparing for a siege. At this stage of the campaign it seemed that there was nothing but disaster before the Germans and their Austro-Hungarian Allies. In the north Von Hindenburg was being driven back into East Prussia, in the south the Austrians had suffered defeat after defeat. The greater part of Galicia had been overrun by the invaders, Przemyśl

was besieged, Cracow was in danger, Hungary was invaded. But in the first days of October there came a sudden change in the whole situation.

On October 7th, almost on the morrow of his defeat in the Augustovo forest, it was announced that Von Hindenburg had been promoted to the rank of Field-Marshal, and given the supreme command of all the armies on the eastern frontier of Germany. He at once began an invasion of Central Poland with several armies of a combined force of over a million men. There is no doubt that while he was still fighting with Rennenkampf between the Niemen and the Masurian Lakes, he had proposed the new plan of operations, and the troops were concentrated for its execution before his promotion was announced, for the movement began immediately. The advance was made simultaneously from several points, the network of military railways along the German frontier enabling the troops and supplies to be concentrated in three masses, on the left based on the fortress of Thorn, in the centre between Posen and the frontier, and on the right in Silesia. The Russians were putting forth their chief effort in the south against Galicia, and had another army in the north operating against East Prussia. In the Polish plain west of the Vistula, they had only relatively small forces chiefly of mounted troops. The Grand Duke Nicholas, the commander-in-chief, was keeping the central Russian armies in the triangle of fortresses behind the Vistula, which is the converging point of the Russian railway lines.

Von Hindenburg's plan was to overrun western Poland, and directly threaten Warsaw, and thus force



HINDENBURG'S FIRST MOVE ON WARSAW.

the enemy to abandon his attack on Cracow in order to reinforce his centre. The line of advance was determined by the direction of railways in western Poland, for the huge armies of modern times cannot live on the resources of the country they occupy, but must depend for supplies on a railway line from their base. The left advanced from Thorn by both banks of the Vistula, the river affording an additional line of supply; steamers towing long strings of barges accompanied the advance. The centre marched on the great industrial town of Lodz. The right followed the two railway lines from the Silesian frontier on both sides of the Pilitza river.

There was no force on the Russian frontiers of Poland that could oppose the enormous masses that were now moving across the border. On October 11th Von Hindenburg occupied Lodz, the second city of Poland. For some days Western Europe heard nothing of this new development. The German reports of the invasion of Poland were suppressed by the censorship, and on the very day that Lodz was occupied a message from Petrograd stated that important strategic movements were in progress and the utmost secrecy must be observed. After the previous successes of the Russians this was supposed to mean that a decisive stroke was being carried out against the Austrian armies, which would complete their destruction. As a matter of fact, when the Russian Staff sent out this communication Ivanov and Ruzsky were falling back from Cracow. In the presence of the dangerous menace against his centre at Warsaw the Grand Duke was drawing in the Russian armies from western

Galicia to reinforce the line of the Vistula. As they fell back the Austrian army under Dankl followed them up. A new tide of invasion came pouring into Poland as the Austrian left pushed forward north of the Vistula, and the right at the same time advanced eastward, reoccupied Tarnow and Jaroslav, and raised the siege of Przemyśl. As the Russians gave way in Galicia, the Hungarian Honved troops drove the raiders back over the Carpathians, and reoccupied the passes.

On the other flank the advance of Von Hindenburg's left along the Vistula endangered the position of the Russians on the East Prussian border, and they fell back through Mława followed up by the German troops who had been defending the lake region. Von Hindenburg's left and centre joined hands east of the Łódź-Lowicz line, and pressed directly on towards Warsaw. At the same time the right, south of the Pilitza, marched on Ivangorod, and a mixed German and Austrian force, using as its line of supply a branch railway from the Kielce-Ivangorod line to the town of Ostrowiec, attempted the crossing of the Vistula at Josefów. On October 20th fighting began on an extended line four miles to the west of Warsaw. The thunder of the cannon could be plainly heard in the city, and German aeroplanes circling over it threw bombs on the railway stations and the military headquarters. The advance of the Germans had come as a surprise to the civilian population, and produced excitement bordering on panic. Tens of thousands fled eastward by road and rail. In the evening the cannon sounded louder and nearer, and the rumour ran that the Russian line was giving way. But the Grand

Duke was only withdrawing to an entrenched position just beyond the western suburbs.

That day was the high-water mark of German success. The fighting lasted three days longer. The Grand Duke based his plan of operations on the fact that the German centre and right were divided from each other by the Pilitza river, a broad stream running between marshy banks and with few crossings. While the enemy was thus divided he had on his own side of the Vistula good road and railway communications, and could concentrate a striking force against each part of the enemy's line in succession. The first stroke was dealt at the Austro-German right. A force which had crossed the Vistula at Josefov was cut off and destroyed, and while the river line was here held in the German front their flank was attacked from the bridges of Ivangorod. They were driven back towards the Kielce railway, and leaving a sufficient force to follow them up, the Grand Duke renewed the same tactics against Von Hindenburg's centre, attacking him in front from Warsaw and on the left from Novo Georgievsk after the Germans had exhausted their strength and incurred enormous loss in fruitless attacks on the entrenched positions. On October 24th Von Hindenburg began a general retirement.

As he fell back towards the German frontier, he took systematic steps to destroy the road and railway communications, in order to delay the enemy's pursuit. On the railways bridges and reservoirs at the stations were blown up, the track was torn up and the sleepers burned, the road bridges were destroyed, and the surface of the roads broken up with steam ploughs or



blown into crater-like holes with charges of dynamite. It was afterwards found that this work of destruction was carried out much more thoroughly on the railways south of Lodz. North of that place, towards the lower Vistula, the wrecking of the railways was limited to doing just enough damage to make them temporarily useless. The fact is worth noting as showing that Von Hindenburg was already planning a new offensive movement.

At the time no one imagined this would be possible. As usual the extent of the German failure was exaggerated, and the idea that the fighting force of the Austro-German Army had been thoroughly broken seemed to be justified by the fact that no stand was attempted anywhere on Polish ground. The whole country was gradually evacuated. In the south the Austrians drew back to Tarnow, and Przemysl was again besieged. In the north the Germans fell back to their entrenched positions among the Masurian Lakes. In central Poland all the enemy's columns recrossed the frontier. In the first week of November the Cossacks of the Russian vanguard rode by the banks of the Vistula almost up to the forts of Thorn, and further south in the Posen province they crossed the border and cut the frontier railway. Once more the rumour ran that the next weeks would witness a Russian invasion of Germany and a march on Berlin.

The news of the Russian victories was all the more welcome in the West, because it came at the time when the attempt to outflank the German positions in France had ended in failure. Antwerp had fallen, and British, French and Belgians were just holding their

own against fierce and repeated attacks of the enemy on the battle front in Flanders. It was confidently predicted that a Russian invasion of eastern Germany would force the Kaiser to divert his best troops to the defence of his empire on that side, and that thus there would be a collapse of the enemy's strength in the West opening the way for his expulsion from Belgium and the north of France. But Von Hindenburg was already preparing for a new invasion of Poland, and the enormous resources of Germany in trained men enabled these operations in the East to be carried through while fresh reinforcements were steadily streaming towards the western front.

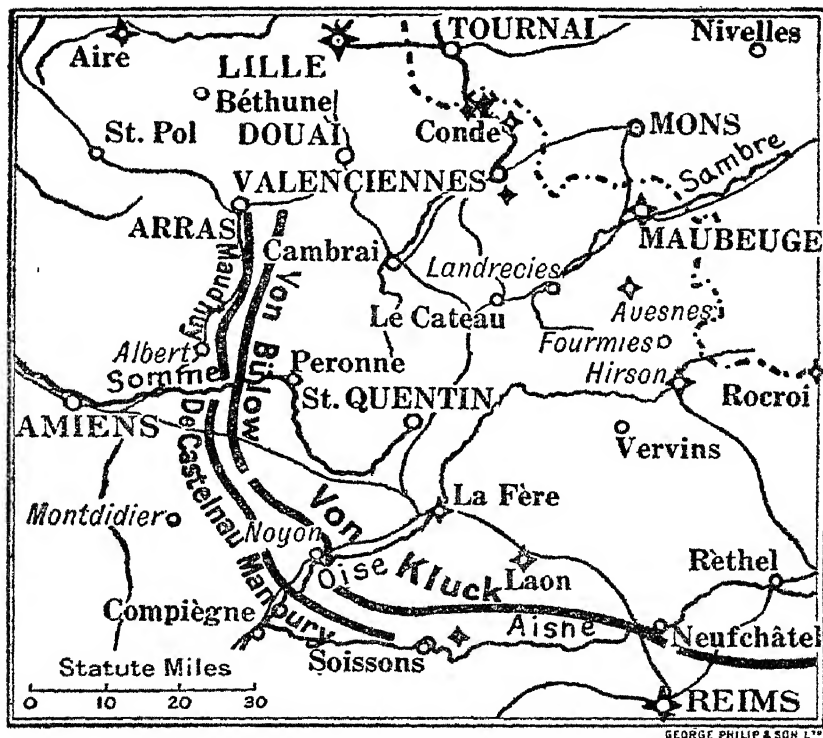
## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ATTEMPT TO OUTFLANK THE GERMAN LINE IN THE WEST

WE have seen that on September 18th General Joffre informed Sir John French of the new plan of operations against the Germans in France. Instead of trying to storm the heights of the Aisne or break through the long line of positions extending eastward to Verdun, French armies forming at Amiens or transferred to the north of Paris by rail, were to move across the Oise on the right rear of the enemy, and by threatening his communications compel him to abandon his entrenched line. This was such an obvious plan that the Germans must have been expecting it. However this may be, they were immediately aware of what was in progress and met the movement by extending their front northward almost at a right angle with the line they had held since the retreat across the Aisne.

The French turning movement began by General Manoury, who was operating on the French left, extending his line westwards across the Oise, and pushing up its right bank in concert with a new army brought up from Paris under the command of General de Castelnau. On September 21st the Germans were

driven out of Noyon, and De Castelnau pushed on to Lassigny and Roye. Beyond these points he made no progress, and there were long days of desperate fighting



THE TURNING MOVEMENT FROM THE WEST.

in which the positions at Roye and Lassigny were alternately lost and won by the French.

De Castelnau was reinforced with some Territorial divisions, and in the hope of enveloping the German right he extended his line gradually northwards to the

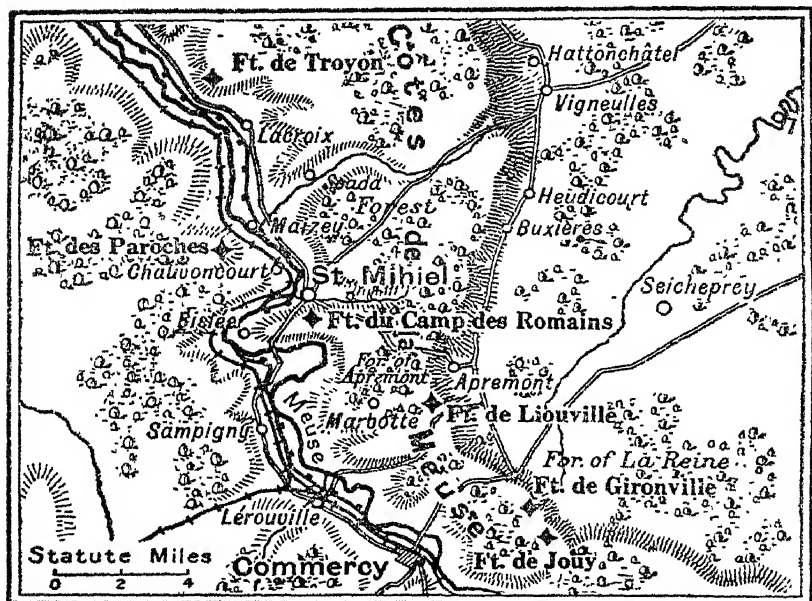
river Somme. But the enemy seemed to have inexhaustible reserves of men. As the French line lengthened out, the German line extended with it, and everywhere the French advance met with unbroken resistance.

In the last week of September the 10th French Army, under General Maud'huy, had completed its formation at Amiens, and on September 30th began to come into line on De Castelnau's left. In the next few days it extended northward to beyond Arras. The Germans tried to break through it at the great junction of roads and railways on the plateau of Albert, and here was fought one of the hardest battles of the war. The French successfully held their ground.

During these operations fighting had not ceased along what we may call the main battle line from the Aisne eastwards to the Vosges. At most points the deadlock continued. Both sides were strongly entrenched, and if a little ground was won at one point, it was lost at another. The German guns were thundering against Rheims, but the French possession of the place was never in serious danger. In the Vosges some little progress was made down the eastern valleys towards the plain of Alsace, but it was measured only by half a mile here or there. The only serious change in the situation was on the heights of the Meuse south of Verdun. Here for a moment the French positions were in danger.

General Sarraill was holding the entrenched camp of Verdun, defending not the permanent forts, the position of which was well known to the enemy, but an advanced line of entrenchments in the wooded hills on

the north and east of the place where he had established batteries of heavy artillery and howitzers in well concealed positions. In the last days of September the Germans attempted to isolate Verdun by breaking through the line of forts that extends from the fortress

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ATTACK ON ST. MIHIEL.

along the heights on the east bank of the Meuse towards Epinal.

The force employed for the operation was a corps of the Bavarian Army under General von Strantz. Advancing from the direction of Metz the Bavarians on the 21st seized the spur of the plateau at Hattonchâtel. They then brought their siege guns up to the

heights by the road which ascends from below the spur. The fort of Troyon on their right front had been reduced to ruins during the Crown Prince's attack earlier in the month. The object of the present expedition was to get possession of the crossing of the Meuse at St. Mihiel. To do this it was necessary to reduce the fort of Camp des Romains, which stands on a bold spur above the town, and takes its name from an ancient entrenchment close by. The forts of Paroches and Liouville would also have to be silenced. The three forts were attacked by long-range fire over the woods. During the bombardment the Bavarians had to repulse attacks from the northwards made by the Verdun garrison and southwards from Toul. Fort Liouville was soon silenced, and the batteries were then moved up to closer range against the Camp des Romains. The fort was soon shattered by the heavy shells of the attack, but the garrison repulsed the first attempt to storm it. Subjected to a new bombardment which blew up their chief magazine, they at last agreed to evacuate the work. The survivors of the garrison were a mere handful, many of them wounded, and the Bavarians heartily cheered them as they marched out through St. Mihiel. The fort of Paroches was then silenced by fire from the captured heights, and the crossing of the river was in possession of the enemy.

But the resistance had lasted long enough to give Sarraill time to concentrate a strong force in entrenched positions on the west bank of the Meuse. All the Germans could do was to hold St. Mihiel with its bridges and a narrow space of ground on the west bank within a bend of the river. They had opened a

door in the barrier of forts, but they could not come out through it, and thus their success had no practical results. If they had been able to advance from St. Mihiel they could not only have surrounded Verdun on all sides, but they would have been able also to act against the flank and rear of the French and roll up their line towards Rheims. All efforts to expel them from the ground they had won proved, however, unavailing. There were weeks of hard fighting on the east side of the Meuse heights between the Germans and French troops based on Toul. Here, too, both sides entrenched themselves in the woods, and there was the same deadlock that prevailed for hundreds of miles along the opposing fronts.

In this state of things the critical point where something decisive might occur was the extremity of the two lines in the north-west of France. Here, as we have seen, the armies of Manoury, De Castelnau and Maud'huy, as they extended the line northwards to outflank the Germans, found themselves at every point opposed by a new line of enemies—a line that grew as rapidly as their own. It was fed partly by new troops arriving from Germany, partly by the transfer of whole army corps from the entrenched German positions further east, which had gradually grown so strong that they could be safely held by diminished numbers. In the last days of September on both sides new plans were being worked out. That of the Germans was a bold scheme for meeting the French outflanking movement by a counter-attack which would in turn strike in behind the extremity of their far-stretched line.

New armies were to be massed in Belgium, and



directed towards Lille and the extreme north of France, so as to push in behind the extreme flank of Maud'huy's Army. The movement would, if it succeeded, envelop and destroy this force, and at the same time it would give the Germans an open way to the ports of the Channel and to Amiens. But the primary object of the movement was not a mere dash for Calais, but the destruction of the French Field Army, beginning with its extreme left.

In the trench warfare, which had been going on for weeks, cavalry had been useless as a mounted arm, and where they were employed they had been given the unfamiliar work of manning entrenchments. The Germans were able now to collect a large mounted force in the west of Belgium. These were launched upon a great raid into northern France, which was to prepare the way for the new invasion. But before the principal move began, it was advisable to put an end once for all to the standing menace of the Belgian Army. Since they retired into the fortress of Antwerp in August, the Belgians had twice made dangerous sorties, and the presence of this army of over 100,000 men north of Brussels, with Antwerp as a base for its operations, made it necessary for the Germans to keep a large force to watch it. It was therefore decided that the first operation of the month of October should be the siege of Antwerp.

The German plans at the end of September may therefore be thus summed up. The French were to be held all along the line from the Vosges to the Aisne and to the north of Arras, and were to be outflanked in the north by an army concentrated in Belgium,

whose advance would be heralded by a series of cavalry raids into the country in the French left rear. As a prelude to the whole movement, Antwerp was to be reduced and the Belgian Army put out of action.

The Allies had also a new plan of operations, or a further development of that on which they were already engaged. The British force on the Aisne had originally been placed on the extreme left of the Allied line, where it could depend upon a short line of communications with its base of supply at the Channel ports. It was decided to transfer it from its actual position to the extreme left. Amongst other advantages this would simplify the supply of the Army. It would no longer have to use for this purpose lines of railway crossing those used by the French, but would again depend on short lines for the Channel ports.

But it was not merely a question of supply. The British Army, under Sir John French, was to be used as a striking force against the German right. New French armies were available to take the place of our men in the trenches on the Aisne, though the training of these new units might not be adequate for more active operations. The three Army Corps and the British Cavalry Division were to be gradually withdrawn from their positions, and sent to the north. An attempt was made to conceal the change from the enemy. The troops were withdrawn by night, and all the subsequent movements until they entrained for the north were made in the same way. There were moonlight nights at the beginning of October, and this facilitated the night marches of our troops from the Aisne positions

to the railways north-west of Paris where they started on their journey by train. The cavalry and the 2nd Corps, under Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, detrained at Abbeville, and marched up to the line of the Lys near St. Omer, where the 3rd Corps, under Pulteney, was detraining, and the 1st Corps under Haig, was subsequently to arrive. A cavalry division and one division of the 4th Army Corps, under Sir Henry Rawlinson, had been landed at Ostend and Zeebrugge. French troops were in movement in the direction of Dunkirk, and when these preparatory operations began, it was hoped that the advance of the British from the neighbourhood of St. Omer, under Sir John French, and of Rawlinson's force from Ostend and Zeebrugge, would produce an effective pressure on the Germans that would come in time to save Antwerp.

Before the British troops from the Aisne reached the north of France the German cavalry raids had begun. In the last days of September masses of the enemy's horsemen, supported by infantry detachments, had crossed the Belgian frontier, and pushed south and west round Lille and St. Omer and Cassel, where they were almost within sight of the Channel. Their progress was delayed by French cavalry sent northwards to guard Maud'huy's flank, but the Germans were in superior numbers and their advance on a wide front caused considerable alarm. It was a repetition of what had happened in August when they had for a while overrun the country between Lille and the sea.

During this time the concentration of a new German Army in Belgium was still in progress. Four reserve corps were being brought up from the Rhine, and

troops were being drawn from various parts of the entrenched line in France. Meanwhile the armies which had been so far watching Antwerp were reinforced by Austrian infantry and artillery, and a marine division of bluejackets from the German Navy. The whole was placed under the command of General von Beseler. The strength of his Army has been variously estimated at from 150,000 to 200,000 men. In the last week of September he was ordered to begin the siege of Antwerp.

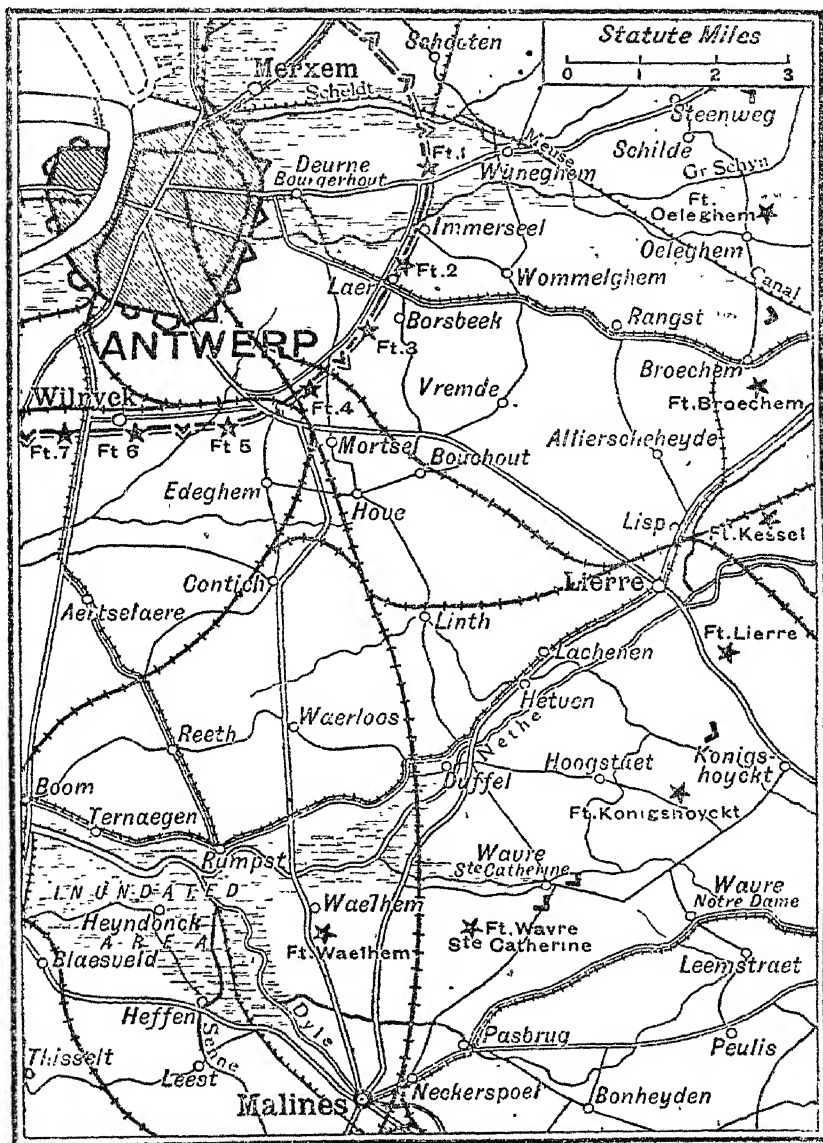
## CHAPTER XV

### THE FALL OF ANTWERP

VON BESELER selected as the front on which Antwerp was to be attacked the south-eastern defences from fort Waelhem near Malines to fort Lierre, near the town of the same name on the little river Nethe. This section of the front is about eight miles long, and was defended by four forts with heavy guns mounted in armoured turrets. There were batteries between them, and a second line of defence was provided by the river Nethe. The sluices had been opened, so as to inundate the ground on both banks, and on the north side of the river a line of entrenchments had been constructed.

Von Beseler began his operations on Sunday, September 27th, by attacking the line of the Scheldt, west of Antwerp in the direction of Termonde. His object was to cut the line of retreat of the garrison towards Ghent and Ostend. The fighting along the Scheldt continued throughout the siege, but the Belgians successfully defended the river line.

On Monday, the 28th, the German batteries, south and east of Malines, opened fire on the forts at a range of about seven miles. The guns were heavy howitzers



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SIEGE OF ANTWERP.

throwing 800-lb. shells, some of them being supplied by the Austrian artillery. It is not quite certain, but it is probable that there was also one of the great 16-inch howitzers that had been used against Liège. The forts first attacked were those of Waelhem and Wavre Ste. Catherine. The latter fort was silenced on the Tuesday afternoon. Its magazine was blown up and its armoured turrets wrecked. On the next day, Wednesday, the 30th, very few of the guns of Waelhem were in action. The Germans had been firing not only at the fort but also at the Antwerp waterworks on the other side of the Nethe directly in the rear of Waelhem. On the Wednesday afternoon the bombardment blew up an embankment of the reservoir and the rush of water flooded the Belgian trenches along the Nethe. The damage done to the reservoir cut off the chief supply of water from the city, which till the end of the siege had to depend mostly on what could be got from a few artesian wells.

On Thursday morning, October 1st, the few guns still in action at Fort Waelhem were silenced, and before evening the guns of the two remaining forts on the left of the line, Konigshoickt and Lierre, were also put out of action. Thus by a four days' bombardment Von Beseler had destroyed the main Belgian line of defence, south of the Nethe. Before the war such a result would have been regarded as utterly impossible. It was then thought that the new forts of Antwerp, with their armoured turrets and massive beds of concrete, could stand a siege of several months.

The defence of the south-east front of the fortress

now depended upon the improvised line of defences along the north bank of the Nethe. The bombardment of this position began on the Thursday, and continued throughout the following day. On that morning—Friday, October 2nd—King Albert held a council of war with the Commandant of the fortress, General de Guise, and the Commander of the Field Army. It was then decided that with a breach eight miles wide in the circle of the outlying forts the prolonged defence of Antwerp had become impossible. It was important, however, that the field army should not be involved in the fate of the fortress, and arrangements were made for its withdrawal to begin in order that it might join the Allied Armies in western Belgium or the north of France. It was arranged that the Government should be transferred to Ostend, and the British residents were warned to leave the city. A flight of the inhabitants had already begun. They were going away northwards to the Dutch frontier, and in boats and steamers down the river to Flushing.

But in the afternoon there came a dramatic change in the situation. A couple of motor-cars drove in from Ostend, bringing Mr. Winston Churchill and a party of naval officers. He announced the immediate arrival of a British naval division with heavy artillery to assist in the defence, and it would seem that at the same time he gave the Belgian Government a hopeful forecast of operations that were being begun for the relief of Antwerp.

A French naval brigade 6,000 strong was also sent by way of Dunkirk to assist in the defence of Antwerp,



but they got no further than Ghent. There was a combined French and British plan formed far too late to succour the fortress. But the whole story of the projected relief of the city is still very obscure.

This much we know, however—since August the Royal Marines had held Ostend, and in the first days of October at that place and further north at Zeebrugge, a British military force was landed, which was not under Sir John French's command, but took its orders directly from the War Office in London. It was officially known as the 4th Army Corps, commanded by Sir Henry Rawlinson, but it was made up of only the 7th Infantry Division, and a division of cavalry under Sir Julius Byng. Rawlinson established his headquarters at Ghent. At the same time French troops were being hurried up to Dunkirk, and the British Expeditionary Force was being transferred from the Aisne to the north of France. In giving an account of the expedition to Antwerp, Mr. Churchill said that it was only part of a larger operation. The projected operation apparently was to be an attack on the flank and rear of Von Bescler's besieging army, while the Belgians, with the help of the Naval Division, held it in front along the entrenched line of the river Nethe.

The first of the reinforcements, a brigade of the Royal Marines, reached Antwerp on the Saturday afternoon, and marched out to Lierre where it took over the defence of the town and the neighbouring entrenchments from the Belgians, who for twenty-four hours had been repelling persistent attacks of

the enemy. While keeping up a continual bombardment of the entrenchments, the Germans had worked their way up to close range on the other side of the river, and were making repeated attempts to cross it. On the night of Sunday, the 4th, they succeeded in doing this a little distance to the west of Lierre, where they drove a Belgian regiment out of its trenches. The position was recaptured, however, with the help of the Marines, but the Germans still maintained their footing at one point on the north bank.

During the following day the Germans renewed their attacks, and towards nightfall captured a long line of trenches on the north side, almost isolating Lierre. In the afternoon the rest of the British Naval Division, two brigades made up chiefly of Naval Reservists and Volunteers, reached Antwerp. It was intended that they should reinforce the fighting line along the Nethe, but that evening it was recognised that the position would have to be evacuated during the night, and the two naval brigades were, therefore, sent to man the inner line of defence close into the city—the line of the older forts.

On the Monday, the entrenchments along the Nethe, having been abandoned during the night, the Marines and the Belgians fell back towards the city, holding for a while a lightly entrenched line between the inner and outer defences. By nightfall all the ground outside the line of Brialmont's old forts was in possession of the enemy or commanded by his artillery. On the morning of Tuesday 6th, the Belgian Army began to evacuate Antwerp, marching across the Scheldt by a bridge of boats.

That morning Von Beseler sent in a summons for the surrender of the city, threatening that if the defence was prolonged, he would begin a bombardment. He also requested that a map marked with the position of the hospitals and public buildings should be sent out to him, so that his gunners might avoid injury to them. The summons was rejected, for though now Antwerp was quite untenable, it was important to hold out just long enough to cover the withdrawal of the Army. The City Council issued a warning that a bombardment was imminent, and there began a miserable flight of tens of thousands along the roads leading to the Dutch frontier. Those of the citizens who remained took refuge in their cellars, and shortly after midnight the German shells began to burst over the houses.

The damage done was not great, and there was little loss of life. The shells were mostly shrapnel which burst high, sending down showers of bullets. Here and there a shell burst its way through a roof or wall, and started a fire, but these fires did not spread far. A report current at the time that all Antwerp was in flames was caused by the red glare in the sky and the clouds of black smoke that rolled up from the huge oil tanks near the river bank, which had been set on fire by the garrison to prevent this useful supply falling into the hands of the enemy. The bombardment continued all through the night and the following day. The Army was moving out westward, its march encumbered by crowds of fugitives, while a great multitude of panic-stricken people poured along the northern road to Rossendaal on the Dutch border.

The British naval division was given the honourable task of holding the southern defences to cover the retreat. On the night of the 8th, they were ordered to withdraw, but the order reached the 1st Brigade after a long delay, and when they retired across the bridge the Germans were already pushing into the southern suburbs, and further west they had crossed the Scheldt so as to threaten the line of retreat.

On the 9th Von Beseler took possession of the city, some 50,000 men marched in, and there was a great review of the victorious army in the Place de Meir, the broadest avenue of Antwerp. The march past lasted for hours.

But meanwhile the Germans had repaired the bridge of boats which had been broken by the Belgian rearguard, and were pursuing the retreating garrison along the roads towards Ghent. The line of retreat was cut by a column that had pushed across the Scheldt near Termonde, and some thousands of the Belgians and the greater part of the first Naval Brigade were captured, or forced across the Dutch frontier, where the men laid down their arms. Of the Naval Brigade about 400 were taken prisoners by the enemy, and 2,000 took refuge in Holland.

The capture of the great fortress of Antwerp in a siege that lasted only eleven days was certainly an important success to the German arms. But if Von Beseler had taken the city, he had failed to capture the Belgian Field Army. King Albert was marching westward to join hands with the Allies, and the spirit of his little Army was as unbroken as it had been after the fall of Liège. What was left of the Naval Division

was sent by rail to Ostend, and returned to England, but Rawlinson, with the 7th Division and Byng's Cavalry, fell back towards the coast, covering the retirement of the Belgians. On the 12th Von Beseler occupied Ghent. On the 14th he was at Bruges, and next day the Germans reached the sea at Ostend. The Belgians and British were falling back to a new line of defence along the canalised river Yser from Nieuport by Ypres towards the river Lys. British and French armies were being brought up to close the wide gap between Ypres and the left of the French main line of battle north of Arras. At the same time the German Cavalry were raiding the north of France, and had isolated Lille, which was held by a garrison of French Territorials. Through Belgium new German armies were being moved towards the gap in the Allied line, while Von Beseler from Ostend prepared to attack the Belgians on the Yser. It was one of the critical moments of the war. If the British Expeditionary Force and the French troops which were being moved northward could not close the gap about Lille a new tide of German invasion would come pouring into the north of France, and the Allied attempt to outflank the invaders would be successfully countered by an outflanking movement through Lille and along the river Lys, which would make the whole position from the Oise to Arras untenable, and cut off the Belgian Army and Rawlinson's force, which would be driven back to the sea.

It was said at the time that the Germans were making a dash for Calais. This was a popular but somewhat misleading description of their operations.

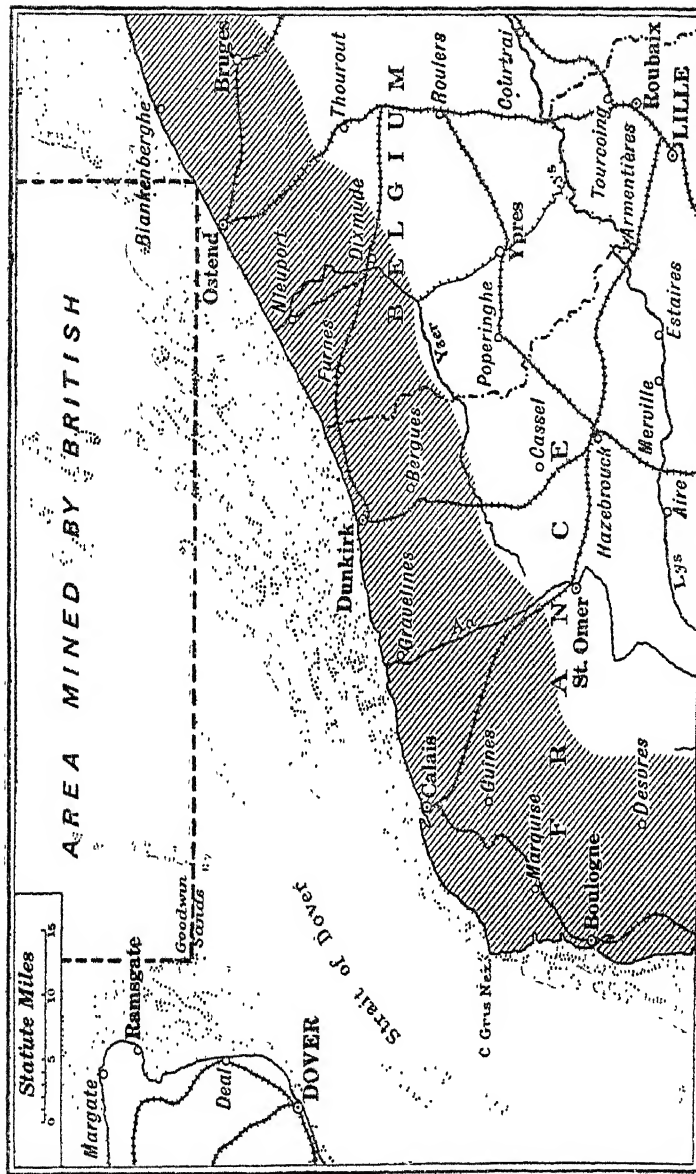
They were really trying to deal a decisive blow against the Allied armies in the field. If this succeeded the occupation of Calais would cost them no greater effort than had been required for the taking of Ostend, once the Belgians were driven across the Yser.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE GREAT BATTLES IN FLANDERS

It was while the Belgian Army was retreating from Antwerp that the first of the British troops transferred from the Aisne began to come into action in the north of France. These were Allenby's Cavalry Division and the Second Army Corps under Smith-Dorrien. They had detrained at Abbeville and other stations on the Somme, and reached the line of the river Lys between Aire and Bethune on October 11th.

Next day while the cavalry crossed the river and began to clear the north bank of the enemy, Smith-Dorrien moving eastward on the south side of the Lys began driving the Germans back towards Lille. Next day the 3rd Corps, under General Pulteney, had completed its detraining at St. Omer, and with the cavalry covering its left it began an advance along the north bank of the river. In the days that followed our men, who had been so long holding the trenches of the Aisne, had the refreshing experience of a steady forward movement in open country, in which the enemy gave way at every point before them. The advance was not rapid—about 15 miles of ground were won in three days. But there was the feeling of success.



GEORGE PHILIP & SON L<sup>td</sup>

# THE BATTLE FOR THE COAST.

The belt of shading along the coast shows the extreme range inland of the heaviest naval guns fired from points close in to the shore. This is, of course, greater than the actual effective range of such guns, and from Calais southwards the height of the coastline would greatly limit any use of naval guns in an attack. East of Calais the coast is flat, and even guns of medium power, mounted on light draught vessels, which could operate in the shallows near the coast, in most places, have an easy range of six or seven miles inland.



We must, however, try to estimate the real character of the victories won by Smith-Dorrien and Pulteney in these October days. The force opposed to them was made up of German cavalry that had lately been raiding northern France, and these were supported by some small infantry detachments and few light guns. It was thus impossible for the enemy to attempt any prolonged stand against our two army corps. They were fighting mere delaying actions to gain time for the masses of their troops that were advancing through Belgium to reach the fighting front.

North of the British advance a French army, under General D'Urbal, was moving eastwards. On October 14th, D'Urbal's vanguard occupied Ypres. Extending to the left he gained touch with Rawlinson's infantry division and Byng's cavalry coming back from Ghent. Further north the Belgians were holding the line of the Yser from Dixmude to the sea near Nieuport. The dangerous gap was being closed.

But on the same day the enemy captured the great manufacturing city of Lille, after a brief attempt to defend it made by the French Territorials. From Lille and along the Lys reinforcements were hurried up to the German forces that had been retiring before Pulteney and Smith-Dorrien. On the 15th, Pulteney occupied Armentières on the Lys, but found his further progress towards Lille arrested by strong forces of the enemy. Allenby's cavalry attempted to seize the crossings of the river further east, but found them all strongly held. Smith-Dorrien, pushing forward on the right of the advance, reconnoitred La Bassée, southwest of Lille, and found the position heavily entrenched

and difficult to attack directly. He endeavoured to cut it off from Lille by an advance through the mining villages between La Bassée and Armentières. He was met by a German counter-attack and had to content himself with entrenching his troops on a line running northwards from the extreme left of the French main battle line at Cuinchy, south of La Bassée. His front then ran northwards to near Armentières. Here the line was taken up by Pulteney's corps and then prolonged towards Ypres by the cavalry, who were dismounted and entrenched along a front that their reduced numbers made dangerously weak. The villages round Ypres to the eastward were held by Rawlinson's men, and then D'Urbal's army and the Belgians prolonged the line to the sea. On October 19th the last of the British troops from the Aisne—the 1st Army Corps under Sir Douglas Haig—reached St. Omer, and were hurried on to Ypres to strengthen that part of the line, which formed a projecting salient towards the enemy and was sure to be fiercely attacked.

Fighting had already begun at various points along the line. For more than three weeks, from October 20th to the middle of November, the battle raged from the coast near Nieuport to the French positions in front of Arras. The intensity of the enemy's attack varied on different days and at different parts of the long front of more than sixty miles. But nowhere was the onset pressed with more persistent energy than against the British lines round Ypres. At the time the rigid censorship of the press prevented the public at home from realising to the full the critical nature of the struggle, the narrow margin by which defeat

was averted and the heavy cost at which victory was secured. In the entrenched lines round the east front of Ypres our men, fighting day after day against heavy odds, were engaged in a three weeks' battle that saw some of the hardest fighting in the whole of our military history, and the cost in killed, wounded, and missing was over 40,000 officers and men.

Von Beseler's army, after seizing Ostend, had begun the attack on the Belgians along the Yser in the middle of October. Heavy batteries were established north of Nieuport to shell the ground held by the defence about the mouth of the Yser, and the line of attack was prolonged inland towards Dixmude. The Belgians had at first occupied Lombærtzyde and other villages north of the river, but they were being steadily forced back on Nieuport by the weight of the enemy's attack, and it seemed inevitable that the Germans would force the crossing at this point and turn the whole of the Allied line on its seaward flank.

But on the morning of Monday, October 19th, there was a surprise for the enemy. The rising sun showed a squadron of British warships lying close in to the shore to the north-east of Nieuport. Closest in, where the small depth of the water seemed to make it impossible for any ships armed with heavy guns to come into action, there were the three Monitors, *Humber*, *Severn* and *Mersey*, light draught ships, originally built for patrol work on the rivers of Brazil, and taken over by our Admiralty after the war began. Each of them carried two 6-inch quick-firers, throwing hundred-pound shells and protected by armour that

could defy the German artillery. In a few hours' bombardment at short range the Monitors silenced the German batteries and cleared the trenches near Nieuport, and the dangerous attack along the coast became a hopeless enterprise.

The coast battle was one of the most curious conflicts in history—such a battle as romancers had sometimes imagined, but which until a few years ago seemed to belong only to the realm of fiction. Armies were fighting on the land, and the heavy guns of the fleet were driving in the German flank. Things like this had happened before, but now German submarines were working under water in an unsuccessful attempt to drive off the Monitors, and British airmen were circling high over sea and land, watching the effect of the fire from the Monitors, and signalling the positions of the German batteries. It was a fight on sea and land, under the water, and in the air.

Foiled in their attempt to force the Belgian line at Nieuport the Germans attacked the line of the canal further inland, and gained the south bank near the village of Ramscappelle. The Belgians had recourse to an expedient which had often been successfully tried in the old wars of the Low Countries. They dammed the canal near Nieuport to keep up the level of the water, and opened the sluices higher up. They then fell back to a line of railway which runs along the south side of the canal at a short distance from it. As the flood rose along the Yser, the railway embankment became a rampart, with the floods extending in front of it to a distance of from a half a mile to nearly two miles. The Germans were forced to with-

draw, and had to abandon many of their heavy guns in the flooded country.

The enemy's attack was then concentrated on the crossing at Dixmude, east of the flooded region. In the beginning of November they captured the town and its bridges, but were unable to issue from it, for the Belgians, supported by a French naval brigade, held entrenched positions commanding every outlet from Dixmude.

Thus on the extreme left, the German offensive had been brought to a standstill. Meanwhile, there had been persistent attacks at two points further south. On the British right the Bavarian Army, which had now occupied Lille, was attacking our positions in front of La Bassée. In the last days of October they captured Violaines and Neuve Chapelle, and there was a moment when it seemed the whole line would have to give way. But with the help of French reinforcements Smith-Dorrien succeeded in holding the shorter line running from Givenchy to Estaires on the Lys, where his left joined the right of the 3rd Corps under Pulteney. At the same time attack after attack was made further south against the French position covering the railway junction at Arras.

But a point, on which the enemy for nearly three weeks attacked with the most reckless fury, was the Ypres position held by Sir Douglas Haig and the 1st Corps, supported by the 7th Division, which had been sent with Rawlinson on the abortive Antwerp Expedition. Ypres stands on a line of canals which runs from Dixmude on the Yser to the river Lys

north of Lille. If the Germans had forced a crossing here the French and Belgian troops holding the line further north would have been cut off and driven back on Dunkirk, or if the enemy after a success at Ypres had swung round to his left, the lines in front of Lille would have been outflanked and forced to fall back into France. The British line covering Ypres ran in a semi-circle through a number of villages on the east—the enemy's side of the canal. Haig's three divisions held a line of about fourteen miles running through the villages of Bixschoote, Langemarck, Zonnebeke, Becelaere, Gheluvelt and Zandevoorde. The line formed a sharp salient with its projecting point near Gheluvelt. The right was prolonged for five miles more from near Zandevoorde to the left of the 3rd Corps on the Lys. This part of the line was very weakly held by Allenby's cavalry dismounted and holding an entrenched front with no reserves behind it. Fortunately the Germans did not realise that this was the vulnerable part of the position, and in the first stages of the long battle they directed their attacks more persistently against the positions held by our infantry in the centre and on the left.

The first attack was made on October 21st against the advanced point of the position. Haig had counter-attacked in the early morning, but had to abandon the effort to advance when the French on his left were driven in by the enemy. The Germans even succeeded in breaking through the line near Becelaere, but Haig recaptured the trenches here by bringing up the last of his scanty reserves. This, however, was

only the beginning of the attack. The Germans were massing four army corps—more than 100,000 men—against the Ypres positions, and with this enormous superiority of numbers they hurled their men in masses, now against one, now against another point of the British front, in the hope of wearing down the defence and breaking through somewhere.

October 22nd was an anxious day. The advanced positions near Gheluvelt were more than once in serious danger, and a fierce attack was hurled against Allenby's thin line on the right. Here some ground had to be abandoned, in order to shorten the front, and make its scanty garrison more adequate to the extent of the position.

On the 24th the French 9th Corps arrived, occupied the British trenches on the left and enabled Haig to send the troops that had held them so far to reinforce his centre. The help had come just in time, for next day the Germans broke through the advanced salient, and were driven out again by bringing up every available man to restore the line. After this there was a brief lull in the fighting, but it was known that the Germans were preparing for a new attack. The information was obtained partly by our airmen watching their movements, partly through the lucky accident of one of our wireless stations intercepting an important message from the German Staff.

The enemy had been reinforced with some of his best troops, amongst others one of the Bavarian Army Corps being brought up from Lille. The attack began on the 29th, and all day the battle raged from the point at Gheluvelt southwards to the crossing of the canal.

Outnumbered everywhere the British just held their own.

The next day, Friday, October 30th, was the most critical of all. At dawn a tremendous bombardment began, which made many of the advanced trenches untenable. At several points the earthworks were blown to pieces and numbers of men were buried in the wreckage. The assault which followed this artillery preparation drove in the line about Zandevoorde, and the enemy pushed forward so far that his shells began the wrecking of Ypres. During the afternoon Haig held on upon his inner line running almost westward from Gheluvelt to a bend on the canal a couple of miles from Ypres. Further south Allenby's cavalry were driven out of the village of Hollebeke and had to fall back upon St. Eloi, directly south of Ypres. From this point his new line ran by the village of Messines to the left of the 3rd Corps. Reinforcements were hurried up from various points. These included four regular battalions, which had just been withdrawn from the line at La Bassée for a much-needed rest, and a Territorial battalion, the London Scottish.

There was desultory fighting during the night, and on the Saturday morning the attack was renewed in full force. After a desperate resistance our men were driven out of Gheluvelt, and the line had to be withdrawn nearly two miles into the scattered woods that form a belt of forest to the east of Ypres. The Scots Fusiliers were cut off in the retirement and only a handful escaped. A storm of shells fell upon the village of Hooze, behind the woods, where Haig had his headquarters, and where Sir John French was with



him. Six of the Staff were killed, and General Lomax, commanding the First Division, was badly wounded. The line was broken and the whole position seemed in imminent danger of collapse, nor was this the only danger point. Further south Allenby was barely holding his own.

Late in the afternoon the situation was saved, partly by a counter-attack of the 2nd Division from the British left on the flank and rear of the German who had broken through, partly by the arrival of a French brigade on the right. But south of Ypres the fighting went on long after dark. The village of Messines was captured by the enemy and retaken by an attack in which the London Scottish bore leading part. But much ground had been lost, and during the night a new line was being entrenched from the centre.

Until long after people at home knew little of what had happened. The newspaper reports told chiefly of the exploits of the London Scottish, and the official Press Bureau, after having issued no news for some days, sent out on the evening of the 31st a statement that there had been severe fighting, in which our troops had everywhere repulsed the Germans.

On November 1st, the enemy concentrated his attacks on the right of the line and succeeded in capturing Messines. The energy of the Germans then seemed to have become exhausted, and during the following days they merely bombarded our positions so that it was possible to improve the entrenchments and bring up reinforcements from the 2nd corps. The attacks were renewed on November 6th and 7th.

Then there was a lull of three days, and on November 11th, the Germans made a final effort. Two brigades of their best corps, the Prussian Guard, were brought up from the Arras district, and made a furious attack upon the British right centre, pushing on in dense masses, singing as they came; they broke through the first line, but were checked and hurled back by the British reserves. Bayonets were crossed in the fight, and the losses on both sides were heavy, but the day ended in a complete victory for the defence. It is said that the Kaiser himself was present watching the attack, and hoping to ride into Ypres when his veteran guardsmen had broken through the last line of the defence.

After this failure the Germans abandoned the attempt to force their way through the Ypres line by massed attacks. Day after day there was a bombardment of the entrenchments and the city behind them with desultory fighting now here, now there along the front. Both sides dug themselves in, and the entrenched lines gradually became more like the front of a permanent fortress than mere field-works. Our success had been dearly purchased. In one of the divisions, out of 400 officers, who originally came from England, only 44 remained, and out of 12,000 rank and file there were a little more than 2,000. But the losses of the enemy must have been far heavier.

It was during these days of battle that the veteran Lord Roberts, who had gone to France to inspect the Indian troops, died at St. Omer after a brief illness. He had visited the lines before La Bassée and seen the British Artillery in action. He had everywhere

received from British, Indian and French soldiers a reception that was like a triumphal progress, and when he died, even the German military press paid its tribute of respect and praise to the brilliant career of the great soldier.

## CHAPTER XVII

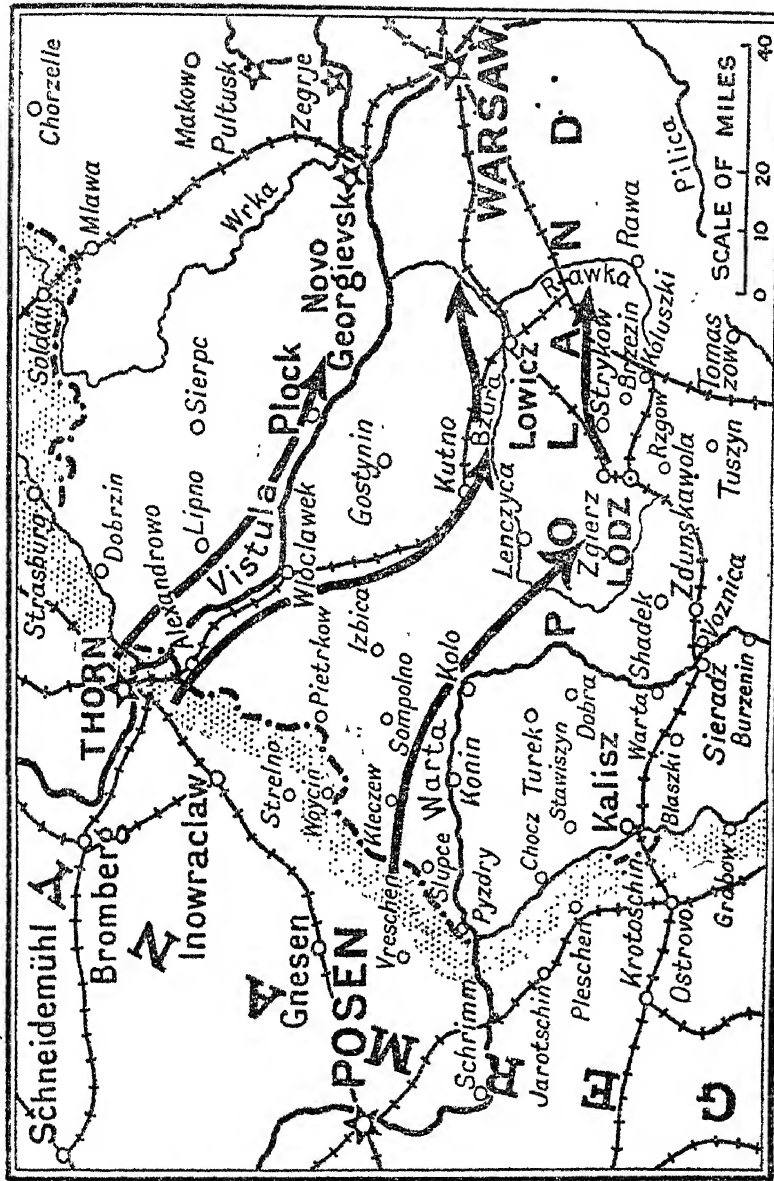
### THE SECOND GERMAN INVASION OF RUSSIAN POLAND

WE have seen that after Von Hindenburg's failure in his first dash for Warsaw, he had retreated to the German frontier, delaying the Russian pursuit by destroying the roads and railways as he withdrew. It was not until the end of the first week in November that the Cossack Cavalry reached the German border. They formed the vanguard of two armies, the northern under Rennenkampf, which was marching towards the Posen frontier, and the southern under Russky, which was moving by the south bank of the Pilitza towards the borders of northern Silesia. Still further south, the Russians had resumed their advance in Galicia. Following up the retreat of the Austrians under General Dankl, Ivanov's army marched by both banks of the Vistula against Cracow. Further east Brussiloff attacked the Carpathian Passes, while Radko Dimitrieff again besieged Przemyśl. At the same time a sixth Russian Army was pushed across the frontier of East Prussia into the Masurian Lake region.

This general advance of the Russian armies took

place just at the time when in the West the German attacks on the Yser-Ypres line were ending in failure, and the war in that quarter was beginning to be mere trench fighting in which neither side gained any marked advantage. But the important point was that at the moment when the German offensive in the West had been stayed all along the line, in the East the enemy's territory was menaced with invasion on all the frontiers of Poland.

But once more the resourceful strategy of Von Hindenburg effected a sudden change in the situation. Leaving an Austro-German force entrenched along the upper Warta to oppose Russky's advance in the south of Poland, he had used the frontier railways to concentrate about 800,000 men between Posen and Thorn for a new advance into Russian territory between the Warta and the lower Vistula. We have seen that in this region he had left the railways only partially destroyed, doing just enough to delay the Russian advance, but nowhere making any demolitions that could not be repaired in a few days. He had chosen during the retreat the ground for his counter-attack. Advancing on a front of between forty and fifty miles, he had during the first stage of the movement both his flanks protected by the rivers, which he could also use as auxiliary lines of supply. He would at first have to deal only with Rennenkampf's army. The absence of good roads and cross-railways between the main lines radiating westwards from Warsaw would make it difficult for Russky to reinforce his colleague in the north. Von Hindenburg could therefore count upon having a superiority of numbers at least during the



HINDENBURG'S SECOND MOVE ON WARSAW.

first stages of his advance. As so often happened in this war, the victors in the fighting before Warsaw had over-estimated the injury done to the defeated side. The Russian Staff thought the German armies were badly beaten, and they had therefore ventured to take very serious risks. They had broken up their forces into six armies, which were operating in various directions on a front of nearly 1200 miles. Von Hindenburg, using his frontier railways to concentrate on one point of this enormous front, could count with certainty on beginning his operations by a successful advance against an opponent who must inevitably be inferior in numbers. It was on November 13th that the Grand Duke Nicholas realised that instead of invading Germany he would have to oppose the march of a huge army into northern Poland. His advanced cavalry were being driven in all along the northern front from the Warta to the borders of East Prussia, and his aviators discovered that behind the advancing German cavalry the roads were packed for a hundred miles with marching columns, and the heavy traffic on the frontier railways told that the concentration of the enemy was still in progress. Rennenkampf was ordered to fall back to the neighbourhood of Lodz and Lowicz, and there make a stand against the new invasion. Russky was directed to suspend the attack he was preparing on the enemy's entrenchments in the south, and send reinforcements to his colleague. At first no change was made in Galicia. The Grand Duke hoped that the invasion of Poland might be arrested while the attack on Cracow and the Carpathian Passes was still pushed forward.

No attempt was made to stop the German advance in its first stage. The Russians selected as the line on which to make a stand a front of about fifty miles, covering the towns of Lodz and Lowicz with the railway between these places and two lines to Warsaw to ensure the arrival of supplies and reinforcements. Fighting began about November the 15th all along the front. The first success was won by the Germans on the 19th, when General von Mackensen, who commanded Von Hindenburg's left, succeeded in crossing the marshy course of the upper Bzura, and brought a superior force to bear upon Rennenkampf's centre. A strange situation followed. Two German army corps forced back the Russian line into a loop some fifteen miles deep and five or six across. But their further progress was held by the arrival of reinforcements, and Petrograd announced a tremendous victory and the inevitable surrender of an immense number of the enemy. These hopes were based on the fact that Von Mackensen's two army corps were for the moment all but surrounded in this loop of the Russian line. He extricated himself by a prompt withdrawal, but the point of the wedge he had driven into the Russian line was broken off and about 10,000 Germans and many batteries of artillery were captured by the Russians.

Some slight advantage, however, had been gained by the invaders. The Russian centre never quite regained the ground it originally had held. There was a deep bend in the line east of Lodz, and the front then curved round the town to the westward, making a dangerous salient not unlike that of the Allied line



at Ypres, though on a larger scale. Against this advanced curve, Von Hindenburg concentrated his attacks. At the same time Russky's army, which had already sent away reinforcements to the north, abandoned its attacks on the entrenched German line along the upper Warta, between Czenstochowa and Wielun. This enabled the Germans to push forward from the Warta against the left rear of the Lodz position. Under this double pressure Rennenkampf began to withdraw his left. On December 5th he abandoned Lodz, and next day the Germans occupied the city.

It is the second largest place in Poland. Thirty years ago it was a small country town, but it has rapidly grown into a kind of Polish Manchester. Its main street is nearly seven miles long, and all the side streets are crowded with workmen's dwellings and enormous spinning mills and factories, mostly erected with German capital. It is, in fact, almost a German colony in Poland, and the invaders were welcomed by the business community. From the military point of view the only advantage of the capture of Lodz was that it gave the Germans possession of a most important railway junction in western Poland.

After the loss of Lodz, there was a very bitter outburst in Russia against Rennenkampf. The attacks upon him were absolutely unfounded. His operations had delayed the enemy for nearly a month, and rendered the subsequent defence of advanced positions covering Warsaw possible. But he was the son of a naturalised German subject of Russia, and, despite all his services, the public insisted that he had been only half-hearted

in his opposition to the German invasion. He was deprived of his command, and Russky was given the general control of the defence of Central Poland, the chief control of the operations remaining, of course, in the hands of the Grand Duke Nicholas.

The Grand Duke decided to withdraw the Russian armies to a strong defensive line nearer Warsaw. The advantage of this was not merely that the front to be held would be shortened by some hundreds of miles, but the whole problem of supply and mutual support would be simplified. Warsaw is a centre from which the Russian railways radiate east and west. The nearer the line of defence was drawn into Warsaw, the better would be the railway conditions. The line selected began on the lower Vistula and ran along the east bank of the river Bzura. The lower course of this river is about as wide as the Thames at London Bridge, and a rise of ground on the east bank makes it easy to command all the crossings. The line then ran further south along the river Rawka, a tributary of the Bzura. It then crossed the Pilitza river and followed the course of the river Nida to the upper Vistula. On the withdrawal of the Russians from the upper Warta Ivanov had fallen back from before Cracow, and his troops now held the Nida line and their front was prolonged to the Carpathians along the east bank of the river Dunagec. As long as the Russian left held this river line and Brussiloff watched the Carpathian passes the siege of Przemyśl could be safely continued.

Von Hindenburg's advance was now brought to a standstill. Following up the Russians, he had begun

a series of attacks on the Bzurka-Rawka line on December 9th, and the fighting continued until the end of the year. Occasionally the Germans obtained a footing on the east bank of one or other of the rivers, but they were never able to maintain themselves there. Gradually the energy of their attacks died away. On both sides the armies began to entrench themselves along opposing fronts more than 200 miles in length. The second dash for Warsaw had failed. The nearest German lines were a little more than thirty miles away, and the city could hear the thunder of the enemy's guns, but the entrenched river-lines proved an impassable barrier for the invaders.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A NAVAL DISASTER AND A VICTORY

IN an earlier chapter we carried the story of the naval operations up to the end of October. By that time most of the German commerce raiders had been disposed of. But several of the cruisers of the Kiao-Chau squadron were still in the Pacific, where they had captured many English ships off the South American coast.

In the middle of October a British squadron, under Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock, which had till then been cruising in the Atlantic, rounded Cape Horn in order to clear the Pacific trade route of the enemy. Cradock's squadron originally consisted of the armoured cruisers *Cape of Good Hope* and *Monmouth*, the light cruiser *Glasgow*, and the armed liner *Otranto*. It was a force inferior both in speed and gun-fire to the German squadron that Admiral von Spee had brought out of Kiao-Chau, which consisted of the powerful armoured cruisers *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*, and the three light cruisers *Dresden*, *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig*. But when Cradock entered the Pacific it was believed that the enemy's ships

were scattered at great distances, and that he might be able to deal with them in detail. One of our older battleships, the *Canopus*, had been sent out to reinforce the British squadron, but had not joined when the battle took place.

Letters from officers of the squadron, written during October, showed that they quite realised that they might have to face very heavy odds, and were hoping till the last that further reinforcements would join them from England. Cradock cruised along the South American coast, calling at various ports, and collecting information as to the enemy's movements. In the last week of October he was at Coronel in Chili, and put to sea on receiving a report that some of the German ships had been stopping British traders in that neighbourhood. It is not quite certain that he knew that Von Spee had concentrated all his ships, but it was said of him that he was a man who would not have hesitated to attack against any odds, and when he left Coronel he was looking for the enemy. The *Canopus* had rounded the Horn, but was still 200 miles away when the battle began on the evening of November 1st.

The enemy had been sighted at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. There was a heavy wind and a high sea. The German ships, led by the two big cruisers, had slipped in between the British squadron and the coast. Both fleets were steaming south, and gradually closing on each other. They were within long range towards 7 o'clock. The sun was setting, and the British ships stood out strongly against the red glow of the western sky, while the Germans had for their

background the high land of the coast. The enemy had thus a far easier target than our gunners. In the North Sea battles the German gunnery had been very inferior to ours. In this fight off Coronel Von Spee's gunners showed that they had been splendidly trained. The Germans opened fire at seven miles, and almost at once got the range. The heavy guns of the big cruisers were not firing independently, but in concentrated salvos directed at first at the flagship, the *Good Hope*. For nearly an hour the fight was chiefly between the *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* on the one side, and the *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* on the other. Only a few shots were fired at the *Glasgow*, and the battle had hardly begun when Cradock signalled to the *Otranto* to steam out of the line. For a mere armed liner would have had no chance in a battle between cruisers.

In half an hour the flagship was on fire and the *Monmouth* had been badly hit. The sun had now set, but the rising moon gave a good deal of light. The German Fleet had closed in to a range of less than three miles, when at ten minutes to eight the *Good Hope* blew up, a huge sheet of flame shooting hundreds of feet into the air. The *Monmouth* was, by this time, also on fire, and down by the head. The enemy's cruisers poured a heavy fire into her, and then swept on to attack the little *Glasgow*. She had been pluckily trying to draw them off from the *Monmouth*, but now had to steam away pursued by the German light cruisers. As she fell out of the battle line, badly damaged by the enemy's fire, she saw the *Monmouth* was sinking. During the night she shook off the

enemy's pursuit, and next morning picked up the *Canopus*, and got away safely into the Straits of Magellan.

The battle of Coronel was the one real naval success secured by the enemy. It gave Von Spee's squadron the mastery of the South Pacific, but only for a few days. Steps were at once taken to destroy the victorious fleet. Japanese, French, British and Australian warships were hurried from all parts of the Pacific towards the South American coast. Von Spee eluded their first pursuit and made his way round Cape Horn into the South Atlantic.

It had been foreseen that he would probably take this course, and as soon as the news of the disaster to Cradock's squadron reached England, a powerful fleet had been despatched to the South Atlantic under command of Rear-Admiral Sir Frederick Sturdee, who had until then been Chief of the Staff at the Admiralty. Sturdee's fleet was made up of the new battle cruisers *Inflexible* and *Invincible*, both armed with eight 12-inch guns, and the three armoured cruisers *Carnarvon*, *Kent*, and *Cornwall*, the light cruiser *Bristol*, and the armed liner *Macedonia*. The secret of the expedition was wonderfully well kept, and Sturdee's fleet was hidden away in the harbour of Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands, where Von Spee believed the only ships available were the little *Glasgow* and, perhaps, the old *Canopus*. When he rounded Cape Horn the German Admiral's plan was to seize Port Stanley, and make it a base of operations for further raiding the South Atlantic.

At dawn on the morning of September 8th, he

approached the port. Shortly after 9 a.m. he was off the harbour mouth, after firing some shots at the signal station as he came up. To his surprise, instead of the two or three ships he had expected to find behind the headlands, he saw the huge battle cruisers steaming out to attack him, followed by a long line of warships. The Germans at once turned out to seaward and went off under full steam, hoping to avoid battle with the overwhelming force of the British.

The Germans had a start of some twelve miles, and they kept out of range till the afternoon. At two o'clock the battle cruisers had got near enough to bring their heavy guns into action, and a running fight went on till after dark. At 4 o'clock the *Scharnhorst* sunk. Two hours later the *Gneisenau* went down. Earlier than this the enemy's light cruisers had gone off on a separate course, pursued by the *Kent*, *Glasgow* and *Cornwall*. At half-past seven the *Nürnberg*, which had already been set on fire, sank with her guns firing till the last. At nine the *Leipzig* went down in the darkness. The *Dresden* was the only ship which got away, and she was believed to be very badly damaged.

The losses of the victorious squadron were slight. On the two battle cruisers only one man was killed. Their speed and gun power enabled them to fight at ranges at which the German guns were all but harmless. The combined losses of the lighter ships were 13 killed and 16 wounded. About two hundred of the enemy's men were rescued from the sea after their ships went down, among them was the Captain of the *Gneisenau*. Admiral von Spee went down



with the *Scharnhorst* with his two sons, who were serving with him.

In both the battles—that of Coronel and that of the Falkland Islands—the defeated squadron was from the first in a hopelessly inferior position. But both the officers and sailors of the British squadron under Cradock, and the German squadron under Von Spee, fought till the last with reckless courage without a thought of surrender. In the battles of Nelson's day, ships were seldom destroyed or sunk. The moment came when it was recognised that on one side further resistance was hopeless, and the flag was hauled down. The naval war of to-day has a more terrible aspect. The defeated ship sinks suddenly under the fire of the victor. Her officers and crew accept their fate, and fight her guns so long as they are above water. In six months of naval war many ships were destroyed on both sides, but no warship became the prize of the enemy.

After the Falkland Islands battle the ships which had been sent on the expedition at once returned to the European seas. A few weeks later the battle cruisers, which had taken the leading part in the chase and fight, were engaged in the attack on the Dardanelles. It is evident that this type of ship, with its heavy armament and high speed, is one of the most valuable elements in our Navy. One can only regret that the battle cruisers were not employed at an earlier date in the work of clearing the seas of the enemy's raiders. Their presence in the Pacific in October would have saved us the disaster off Coronel.

## CHAPTER XIX

### NAVAL OPERATIONS AND AIR RAIDS DURING THE WINTER

ALL through the winter months the German battle fleet remained in the Kiel Canal under the protection of the coast fortifications. The German Admiralty persevered in its plan of keeping this their main fighting force intact for a later stage of the war, and meanwhile continued the guerilla warfare of submarines, light cruisers and aircraft in the hope of doing something to diminish the British superiority in naval power by destroying an important ship here or there. The commerce raiding in distant seas had proved a failure. At a later stage the German submarines were employed in attacks against peaceful traders in the home seas. But this was a later development. In the first months of the war British trawlers and trading ships were occasionally lost by mine explosions, but all the earlier submarine attacks were made against warships.

It is always difficult for a Government to keep a great naval force idle. However autocratic it may be, it is influenced by public opinion, and after a while there is a growing impatience to see the battle fleet attempt

something important. There has been something of the kind even in Great Britain. For most people do not really understand the conditions of naval warfare, and many were very unreasonably looking for a new Trafalgar in the first weeks of the war. In Germany the feeling was much stronger. There had been so much boasting about the fleet that it was disappointing to see it sheltering in idleness week after week behind the coast batteries and minefields. It was probably to give some satisfaction to this impatient longing for naval activity that the German Admiralty used its fast cruiser squadrons for raids on our East coast.

The first of these took place on November 3rd and ended in a fiasco. There was calm weather over the North Sea, with haze in the early morning. As the sun rose just before 7 a.m. a fleet of eight large cruisers steamed in towards Yarmouth. The trawlers outside the port took them for British ships, for they passed through the fishing fleet without interfering with them in any way. Arrived off Yarmouth they formed in line with their broadsides towards the shores, hoisted German colours, and opened fire.

The only British ship at the place was the gunboat *Halcyon*. She ran out of the harbour to reconnoitre the fleet before the firing began, and as the first of the enemy's shots went off, she pluckily fired at the nearest cruiser. The reply was a shower of shells, which carried away her wireless. This slightly delayed the sending of the news of the raid along the coast, but as the *Halcyon* ran back to the harbour, the alarm was sent from the wireless station on shore, and British ships began to gather to attack the enemy.

The German admiral knew perfectly well that he could not remain long off the coast without being attacked by a superior force. The cruisers remained in action only for about three-quarters of an hour. Their fire did no damage whatever. On shore the Territorial regiment, which was patrolling the coast, had rapidly assembled and taken up positions to resist the landing, for it was expected that there were transports behind the cruiser fleet. The Territorials had the novel experience of seeing heavy shells bursting in front of them in the shallows along the shore or in the sand of the beach. But no effective hits were made. Every shell fell short. The explanation was that the Germans took their range from a line of buoys marked on the North Sea chart, but they did not know that after the declaration of war these buoys had been shifted five hundred yards further out to sea, and their range-finding was therefore wrong by this distance.

Towards 8 o'clock the smoke of British ships hurrying to the scene of action warned the Germans that it was time to go, and they ceased fire and began steaming away to the south-eastward, soon followed by a swarm of British light cruisers, destroyers and submarines. The enemy knew that if they waited to engage this flotilla it would only be giving time for more powerful ships to put in an appearance. They therefore steamed off at full speed, dropping mines as they went. These destroyed the British submarine "D 5," two or three trawlers and a tramp steamer. But the Germans suffered a heavier loss. On her way into Cuxhaven one of the most powerful of the cruisers, the *Yorck*, was sunk by collision with a German mine.

At the time there were alarmist suggestions that the Yarmouth raid showed that invasion was possible. It really proved that even the landing of a comparatively small force would be difficult in the extreme. Although, thanks to the mists, the cruisers had eluded our watch on the North Sea, they had not been able to remain a single hour off the coast, and there would therefore have been only time to land a mere handful of men.

By a curious coincidence on the same day that the cruisers raided Yarmouth a powerful British and French fleet was in action off the Dardanelles. Turkey had just thrown in her lot with the Central European powers, and the combined fleet had been sent to blockade the approach to Constantinople. In the morning of November 3rd, the forts at the entrance to the Dardanelles were bombarded at long range. The operation was only a reconnaissance. It was intended to draw the fire of the Turkish forts, and find out what kind of guns were mounted at the entrance. None of the Allied ships were hit, and some damage was done to the forts, but no attempt was made to silence them. It was not till more than three months later that any serious operations in this quarter were undertaken.

On November 11th the old gunboat *Niger* was torpedoed by a German submarine in the Downs. It was a daring exploit, but the loss of the ship was not important. On the 26th there was a more serious disaster at Chatham, when the battleship *Bulwark* blew up at her anchors with the loss of several hundred lives. At the time there was a vague suspicion that

this was the result of another submarine attack. But there is no doubt that the ship was destroyed by the accidental explosion of her magazines.

On December 12th one of our young naval officers, Lieutenant-Commander Norman Holbrook, performed one of the most daring exploits of the war. His submarine, the "B 11," was attached to the blockading fleet off the Dardanelles. He took her into the Straits through five rows of mines, and torpedoed the old Turkish battleship *Messudieh*, which was guarding the minefield. He then came out again through the minefield, and past the forts, escaping an attack of torpedo-boats by remaining submerged, lying on the bottom of the sea for nine hours, waiting for darkness to come on. After this the Turks did not venture to keep any of their ships below the inner forts of the Narrows.

A second and more serious attack on the East coast was made on December 16th. The enemy's raiding squadron was made up of four heavy battle cruisers and four light cruisers. They worked in two detachments. Part of the squadron appeared off Scarborough, and opened fire at five minutes past eight. The bombardment lasted only twenty minutes, and the cruisers then steamed northwards along the coast, shelling the signal station at Whitby as they passed. Meanwhile the rest of the force was attacking West Hartlepool. There was heavy loss of life at Hartlepool and Scarborough. At the former place 82 were killed and 250 wounded. Of these, 21 killed and wounded were casualties in the coast battery which engaged the enemy. At Scarborough there

were 17 killed and 50 wounded, and at Whitby two were killed and two wounded by the few shells fired at the signal station.

Amongst the many civilians who suffered by the bombardment there were a large number of women and children, and at the time, not unnaturally, the raid was denounced as a mere murderous expedition, and a heartless attack on open coast towns. It was argued that the raid was a flagrant violation of the Hague Conventions, to which Germany was a party. But the Hague Convention on naval bombardments unfortunately gives no special immunity to "unfortified" towns. The word never occurs in the Convention. It is only an "undefended" town that is immune from attack, and the general prohibition of the bombardment of undefended places set forth in the first article of the Convention is rendered nugatory by the following article which permits the bombardment of "military works, military or naval establishments, depôts of arms or war materials, workshops or plant which could be utilised for the needs of the hostile fleet or army." This practically renders any coast town liable to bombardment and our own official war code lays it down that a place is defended if it is occupied by troops. At Scarborough the targets selected for the bombardment were so chosen as to suggest that the enemy possessed recent information supplied by spies. Shells fell upon hotels used as headquarters for Territorial regiments, stables where army horses were kept, and heavy fire was directed on the railway station, the waterworks (which are invisible from the sea), and the local wireless installation. All the same, considering

the results obtained, it may well be argued that the German Commander did not observe the Hague rule, which lays down that in destroying what may be useful to an enemy in an open town the attacking force must take all possible care to avoid injury to the peaceful inhabitants. The heavy loss at Hartlepool was partly due to the people crowding into the streets. From a military point of view the raid was entirely without result. The enemy's cruisers did not even succeed in silencing the weak coast battery at Hartlepool. As in the case of the Yarmouth raid, the enemy's cruisers did not venture to remain long on the coast. In little more than an hour they were steaming back towards Germany. As they went they threw mines overboard, and these led to the loss of at least three peaceful traders, two of them British ships, the third a Norwegian steamer.

The new year opened with a serious loss. A squadron of battleships and cruisers which had put to sea on December 31st, was going down Channel in very rough weather. Its destination was the Mediterranean. It was a reinforcement which was being secretly sent to strengthen the Allied Fleets for the attack on the Dardanelles. There was not the usual escort of destroyers, for it was supposed that there were no hostile craft in the western waters of the Channel, and the possible presence of a number of large ships in these waters was believed to be a secret of which the enemy could have no suspicion. But in the early hours of the New Year's night, a German submarine attacked and sank the battleship *Formidable*. A few of her crew were saved by a light cruiser, and a



large number were very gallantly rescued by a Devonshire trawler after they had been adrift for several hours in one of the pinnaces and when they were in the utmost state of exhaustion.

Before the end of the month, however, the navy had the opportunity of once more showing its superiority to the enemy in a pitched battle in the open sea. In the early hours of Sunday, January 24th, the German cruiser squadron set out for another raid on the East coast. The force employed was made up of the battle cruisers *Seydlitz*, *Derfflinger*, *Moltke* and *Blücher*, with four light cruisers and a number of torpedo-boats. At dawn on the Sunday morning they were sighted south of the Dogger Bank by Admiral Sir David Beatty's squadron of battle cruisers. The Germans recognised that they had met more than their match, and steamed for Heligoland pursued by the British. There was a running fight over seventy miles of sea. The *Blücher* was sunk, and two of the other battle cruisers were on fire, when the Germans at length took refuge under the guns of the island fortress. Thanks to our superior gunnery, the British loss in the battle was slight. An officer and thirteen men were killed, three officers and twenty-six men wounded. Beatty's flagship, the *Lion*, was hit on the water's line by a shell, and was towed home by the *Indomitable* after the fight, and one of the destroyers was disabled. About 200 men were rescued from the sinking *Blücher* and brought as prisoners to Leith. The result of the battle was that the German fast cruiser squadron was crippled for months to come and further raids on the East coast were impossible.

Great things had been expected in Germany from the new air fleet of Zeppelins and aeroplanes, and elaborate precautions against air raids were taken in England, cities and towns being kept in semi-darkness at night, and quick-firing guns being mounted in many places to fire upon raiding airships. But the enemy's air fleet accomplished next to nothing. On two occasions bombs were thrown harmlessly into Dover. On Christmas Day an air squadron entered the Thames mouth, but was driven off by gun fire, one of the enemy's aeroplanes being destroyed. Finally, on January 19th, two of the Zeppelins sailed in the darkness over the Norfolk coast and dropped a few bombs on Yarmouth and other places, without doing any serious damage.

On the other hand, our airmen of both the naval and military wings of the service made repeated raids on the German coast, and even into the heart of the enemy's country. The utmost effort was made on these occasions to avoid injury to non-combatants, and the attacks were directed against dockyards, arsenals, airship sheds and railway junctions. The enemy's submarine base at Zeebrugge was repeatedly bombarded from the air. Bombs were thrown into Count Zeppelin's factory at Friederichshafen on the Lake of Constance. On the very day of Beatty's victory off the Dogger Bank, our airmen threw bombs into the gun factory at Essen. In another raid the airship sheds at Düsseldorf were burned, and on New Year's Day a flotilla of seaplanes raided Cuxhaven and successfully shelled the batteries, shipyards, and magazines of the place. The attack was supported by

a squadron of destroyers and submarines, which lay out to sea to pick-up the seaplanes as they returned. The attempt of the German anti-aircraft guns and airmen to drive off our attack proved quite ineffectual.

To sum up, it may be said that our airmen inflicted far more damage on the enemy than we suffered in the few attacks made by the Germans, and while these latter were confined to the mere flinging of a few bombs into two or three places on the coast, all our attacks were directed against military and naval establishments. Aerial warfare is still in the stage of mere beginnings, and we had not the numbers necessary to assert a command of the air in any way equivalent to the command of the sea secured by our navy. But enough was done to show that the German claim to possess an air power that could seriously affect the course of the operations was utterly baseless.

## CHAPTER XX

### MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE NEW YEAR—THE SITUATION AFTER SIX MONTHS OF WAR

THE German attempt to break through the Allied lines in Flanders and the north of France had ended in failure by the middle of November. The second advance against Warsaw came to a standstill a few days before Christmas. On both the Eastern and Western battle fronts the opposing armies were by this time fighting behind lines of entrenchments hundreds of miles long, the strength of which grew from day to day. There was something like a deadlock and the bad weather of the mid-winter months made active operations well-nigh impossible. In the Eastern theatre of war the winter was exceptionally mild. If there had been a hard frost, however much the men might have suffered from the cold, movement would have been possible in all directions over the hard ground. But the mild weather made the country along the Eastern front something like a morass. In the West conditions were almost as bad. During the first half of January there were heavy rains. Trenches were flooded, and all but the main roads turned into quagmires. In Flanders wide stretches of country were under water. The Lys and the upper Scheldt

usually small rivers, were half a mile wide in places. One of the French official communiqués told how difficult the conditions were in a report that a trench near Arras had been evacuated, not because it had been attacked by the Germans, but because the men were nearly up to their shoulders in mud.

On the higher ground along the centre and right of the Allied line in France the conditions were better. In the Vosges the mild winter made active operations in the mountains fairly easy, and at various points the French were trying to gain ground in the valleys of the eastern slope, where they had the satisfaction of feeling that they were fighting on the enemy's ground in the borderlands of the annexed province of Alsace. During the first fortnight of January there was hard fighting in many of the valleys. The chief French effort was made towards Mulhouse, and the fighting took place partly on the lower ground to the east of Belfort, partly in the valley of the Thur, which runs up into the mountains to the Pass of Bussang, north of Belfort. Here the French had occupied Thann in Christmas week, and on January 3rd took the town of Steinbach by storm. After this there was for some ten days hard fighting round the village of Cernay (known to the Germans as Sennheim), and further south there was a battle in the Belfort Gap, in which the flanks of the opposing lines extended to the Swiss frontier. The Switzers massed a large army to protect their territories from violation by either side. In the middle of the month a heavy fall of snow blocked the mountain roads and put a temporary end to the fighting.

Further west, in the woods on the border of Lorraine and around Verdun, in the Argonne forest, and about Perthes to the north-east of Rheims, there was continual trench fighting with insignificant local gains and losses. The only important change in the centre of the line took place near Soissons, where in the second week of January there was something like a pitched battle with a definite result.

Since the battle of the Aisne in September, the French had held various points on the lower slopes of the heights north of the river, the Germans holding entrenched positions along the crest. At the beginning of the New Year, General Manoury, who commanded at Soissons, tried to improve his hold on the north bank of the river. He already held the villages of Cuffies and Crouy, each near the upper end of a narrow valley running up into the heights. The flat-topped spur between these two valleys is marked on the French Staff maps as having a height of 132 metres above the sea level. In the story of this January fighting it is, therefore, known as Hill 132. On January 8th, Manoury attacked the German position on the hill, captured it, and began to entrench the summit. In the following days the Germans made attempts to recapture it, but they employed only small local forces and the French held their own.

But day and night there was a steady downpour of rain and the Aisne was rising rapidly, the flood threatening to sweep away the temporary bridges which had been thrown across it in September. The Germans saw that they had an opportunity of not merely recovering Hill 132, but driving the French

from all the north bank near Soissons, and perhaps capturing large numbers of them by massing a strong force from other parts of the line and attacking Manoury's positions on the north bank at a moment when the flood on the river and the state of the bridges would make it difficult for the French either to reinforce their fighting-line or to withdraw it.

Von Kluck began his attack on the 11th, and the German Staff felt so sure of success that the Kaiser himself arrived to witness the victory. The French made a good fight for two days, but on the 13th they were hard pressed by superior numbers and behind them the river had swept away all but one of the bridges. In the morning, Hill 132 and the villages on both sides of it were stormed, and the French left was forced back towards the flooded river. During the afternoon the Germans cleared all the villages along the river as far as Condé, where they had been in possession of the bridge since September. The French left some guns and several thousand prisoners in the enemy's hands, but saved the bulk of their force by an obstinately fought rearguard action covering the one bridge that remained standing. This success gave the Germans complete possession of all the north bank near Soissons, and made their position on the heights absolutely secure. On the other hand, they could not cross the river, for the French artillery on the high ground of the south bank commanded all the crossings and the level ground near the Aisne. This was the only point on the whole line at which the Germans improved their position during the winter.

In Eastern Europe, at the end of the sixth month

of the war, the opposing armies faced each other—mostly in entrenched positions—along a front of six hundred miles from the Masurian Lake country in the north to the forests of Bukovina in the south. The line ran along the east Prussian border, then through central Poland, along the Bzura, the Rawka and the Nide rivers and by the line of the Dunajec river to the Carpathians. Here the Russians were fighting in the snowy passes, and behind their advanced line the fortress of Przemyśl was besieged, and its fall was impending.

In Serbia the Austrians had suffered serious defeat. On the 2nd of December they had occupied Belgrade and thrown a large army across the Save, but a week later they were completely defeated in an attack upon the Serbian position in the mountains, and their retirement to the frontier became a rout, in which thousands of prisoners and scores of guns were lost. On December 14th the Serbians re-occupied Belgrade.

On December 17th, Britain proclaimed at Cairo the abolition of the Turkish suzerainty in Egypt, and the independence of the country under a British Protectorate. Next day Prince Hussein Kamel, a cousin of the deposed Khedive Abbas, was proclaimed Sultan of Egypt.

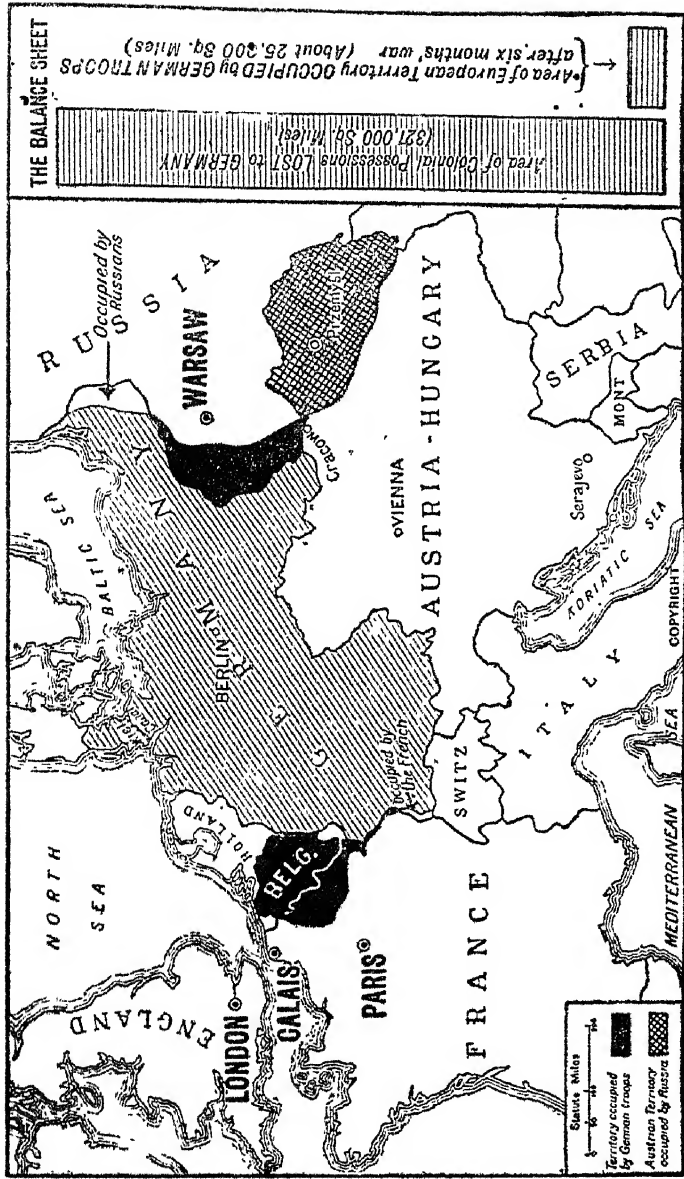
For many centuries before the rise of the Turkish power, Cairo had been the centre of the Mohammedan world and the seat of the Kaliphate. The inauguration of a new Sultanate at Cairo was intended to be the new rallying point to the Mohammedan nations now that the Sultan of Constantinople had become the ally of Germany, and was proclaiming a Holy War



against the Kaiser's enemies. Britain had long been the paramount power on the Nile, and the joint ruler with Egypt of the reconstituted Sudan. The proclamation of the Protectorate practically added all the lands of the Nile to the Empire.

In the first week of the new year the Turks had been defeated in the Caucasus, and on February 7th they failed in their attempt to cross the Suez Canal near Ismailia. Basra, the great trade centre of the lower Euphrates, had already been occupied by an expedition from India, and the Allied Fleet was blockading the Dardanelles. Preparations were in progress for a combined attack of the French and English by the Dardanelles, and the Russians by the Bosphorus with a view to the capture of Constantinople.

In summing up the situation at the end of six months of war, it may be said that no decisive result had yet been obtained on either side. The Germans had overrun the greater part of Belgium, and a considerable part of the north of France, and in the Eastern theatre of war they had occupied about half of Poland, and their entrenched line was within forty miles of Warsaw. On the other hand, the Russians had occupied all eastern Galicia and the Austrian attacks upon Serbia had ended in complete failure. The only new ally that had joined Germany was Turkey, and the Turkish intervention, while on the one hand it closed the exit of the Black Sea to Russian commerce, had on the other hand resulted in a heavy loss of territory to the Turkish empire and the blockade of all the approaches to the capital. Germany had been driven from the Pacific, and all her African colonies



THE FRUITS OF SIX MONTHS' WAR.

The diagrams to the right of the map show the enormous losses Germany suffered in Colonial Territory during this period, compared with the area in Europe then occupied by her troops.

In addition, Egypt (area about 400,000 square miles) had become a British Protectorate, as a direct result of Turkey's intervention.

had either been annexed or invaded. On the sea her commerce had been brought to a standstill, and her cruisers had been driven from the trade routes or destroyed. In the North Sea the German Fleet had not been able to venture upon any more important operations than a number of raids which had proved more annoying than seriously harmful. In the Mediterranean the Austrian Fleet was confined to the northern Adriatic by the joint action of the Allied Fleets.

In the six months of war on land the armies that had begun the struggle on both sides had suffered heavy losses, and the campaign which was to begin in the spring of the new year would be to a great extent carried on by second line troops and new levies. At the end of the first six months the French and Russian armies were probably more numerous and better equipped than at any earlier date in the conflict. Germany had more than four million men in line, and probably at least two million more preparing to be sent to the front. But, compared with the numbers of its army at the outset of the war, Britain had made the greatest effort of all. The army estimates laid before the House of Commons at the beginning of February provided for a force of three million men, exclusive of the army in India. Of these probably about two million were already under arms. From first to last about half a million men had been sent to France and Belgium since the beginning of the war, besides provision being made for the replacing of the white troops brought from India by Territorials, and the reinforcement of Egypt by the Mediterranean garrisons. At an early date it had been foreseen that

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the critical moment of the war would come in the spring of 1915, when the new German levies would be available, and the improved weather would enable both sides to undertake prolonged operations on a large scale. During the autumn and winter the Allied forces in France were mainly acting on the defensive. The German advance had been stayed, but no attempt on a large scale was made to expel the invaders from French and Belgian territory. The efforts of the French troops were confined to securing slight advances at various points on the line.

It is obvious that in the spring campaign strenuous efforts will be made on both sides to put an end to the deadlock that has continued so long. Germany cannot afford merely to hold what she has won. This would put her in the position of a besieged garrison whose resources must sooner or later come to an end. Nor can the Allies afford to rely on the comparatively slow process of merely starving out the central European powers. The strain of war will be felt more heavily the longer it continues, and it is a point of honour to attempt at the earliest possible moment to drive the Germans from the territory they have invaded in Belgium, France and Poland. It is quite certain that at this moment the headquarter staffs on both sides are devising plans for breaking through the long entrenched lines at one or more points, and using the advantage thus obtained to break up and drive back the enemy's force.

The German plan of campaign would seem now to be very different from what it was at the outset of the war. The German Staff then hoped to destroy the fighting

power of France and her Allies in the West by a series of rapid blows, and then transfer a large part of the victorious armies to the Eastern theatre of war to deal with Russia. The plan of campaign now seems to be to hold the Allies in the West in check, and meanwhile to endeavour to get possession of Warsaw and make the Vistula the line on which the Russian armies will be held. The operations against Warsaw are not a direct attack. The main effort of the German armies is being directed against the Russian communications. If Von Hindenburg could cut the railways on which the Grand Duke Nicholas depends for his supplies of food and ammunition the Russian army in central Poland would be in a perilous position, and its peril would probably lead to the abandonment of the projected invasion of Hungary. Once they were in possession of Warsaw and the Vistula line, there would be no further attempt to invade Russia. The German Staff would certainly not risk a march to Moscow. But after this success in the East, every man that could be spared would be sent to the Western front.

The Russian plan of campaign is no longer directed against Cracow. The main effort is being made against the line of the Carpathians, with a view to an invasion of Hungary. A success in this quarter might well force Austria to conclude a separate peace.

Another critical point is Constantinople. The operations of the Allies against the Dardanelles are intended not only to deal a blow against the centre of the Turkish power, but also to clear the waterway from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean, liberate the pent-up trade of southern Russia, and enable supplies and munitions

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for the Russian army to be sent in by an easier route than the Siberian railway or the port of Archangel.

Much will depend on the action of powers that so far have been neutral, but which have a serious interest in the result of the war. Rumania may take the field at any moment in order to secure possession of the districts in Transylvania and the Bukovina, where the population is largely Rumanian in race and language. In Italy there is an influential party which is eager to force the government into war in order to secure the annexation of the Trentino and the coast districts on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, which once belonged to the old republic of Venice. These are largely peopled by Slavs, but the party of *Italia irridenta* claims them as lands that ought to belong to united Italy. Italian troops have already occupied Valona on the Albanian coast.

In these Balkan lands there are other neutrals who may at any moment range themselves on one side or the other. The Greeks claim Macedonia and the western districts of Asia Minor as lands which ought to belong to their kingdom, and are the rivals of Russia for the possession of Constantinople itself.

What the policy of Bulgaria will be is impossible to forecast. "On the one hand, there is the old friendship with Russia, and the traditional hostility to the Turk. On the other there is a long-standing feud with Serbia and a rivalry with Greece for the possession of Macedonia. Albania is another doubtful element. The tribes are divided. The Mohammedan clans are inclined to side with the Turk, and even some of the Christian Albanians are ready to side with them on

account of their fear of annexation to Serbia. Much will depend upon the progress of the Allies towards Constantinople. But he would be a daring man who would venture to forecast the changes that may be produced in the situation in the East by the action of the various Balkan races.

THE END

